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East and West in the Roman Empire of the Fourth Century

An End to Unity?

Edited by

Roald Dijkstra
Sanne van Poppel
Daniëlle Slootjes



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Introduction

Roald Dijkstra, Sanne van Poppel and Daniëlle Slootjes

Unity is at the basis of any succesful state or nation. Without unity, states cannot survive. Once a small city in Latium, the city of Rome showed a remarkable growth, both in its city's territory, as well as in the Empire it acquired. The ability of the Empire's elite to unite the various peoples under its rule led to an exceptional longevity of empire. The Empire's unity was characterised by the creation of a set of shared customs, languages, history and (religious) beliefs, even though the Romans accepted that their inhabitants maintained their own identity accompanied with their own customs as well.¹ As soon as Rome expanded its territory, the bestowal of Roman citizenship on those who were conquered represented the core of what it meant to be a Roman. Former enemies were incorporated succesfully in the empire, either in provinces or client states. The Social War of the early first century BC which broke out because the allies of the Romans demanded Roman citizenship so that they could have a share in the privileges of the Romans, is a clear indication of its worth in the Late Republic. One might argue that the Empire's unity was a succesful construct that was based on unifying many different peoples and their traditions by offering them a Roman way of life as a additional layer on top of their own way of life.

The focus in this volume is on the unity of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity, with a particular concentration on the fourth century, when the internal cohesion of the empire faced serious challenges. The period was an age of transition: new residencies of imperial power emerged in both West and East, with Constantinople as upcoming principal court and stage for imperial triumphs and celebrations. The political division in two parts after the death of Theodosius I, in 395, seems to have marked the end of administrative unity, although Grig and Kelly, among others, have recently argued that the empire's split has been emphasised too much in modern scholarship.² The attitude of the emperors towards Christianity changed from proscription to prescription, though religious belief and practice – Christian as well as traditional – remained di-

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- 1 For the purposes of this volume we deliberately want to stay away from the many and difficult scholarly debates about 'Romanization', acculturation or even creolization.
 - 2 L. Grig & G. Kelly (eds.), *Two Romes. Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2011), p. 17. Instead, they argue that the empire's unity was kept intact to a much larger extent than we think.

verse. Rome's growing status as *the* Christian city culminated in its claim for primacy over other sees in the early 380s.

The concepts of *concordia* and *discordia* pervade late-antique textual and visual as well as material sources. Romans developed and exploited these notions with fairly different (geo-)political, religious, geographical and social ambitions in mind: some strove for unity within the empire, others pursued unity within Christianity. There were advocates for unity among 'real' Romans opposed to threatening 'barbarians' and agents for (a cultural) unity within the senatorial aristocracy. And there were those who rejected these initiatives for uniformity and opted for separation: the split of the empire in 395 was final, but it was certainly not the first division. Besides occasional geographical separate entities, the Latin speaking West and the Greek oriented East had been polarized in intellectual and theological matters. In all cases, people used the concepts of unity and discord in constructing their identity. As a result, the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity was – maybe more than other periods in its history – characterised by its many identities and different groups trying to control the empire.

Our conference *An End to Unity: East and West in the Fourth Century*, held in Nijmegen, 24–26th, October 2012, sought to explore the degree and complexities of unity and discord from a broad historical perspective, aiming to connect assessments of political institutions, religious developments, cultural practices and social interaction. The proceedings offer extended discussions on the ideological messages of unification and the ideal of unity and a universal Empire. The papers are arranged thematically and divided into two parts.

The Concept of Unity and Geopolitical Developments

The first group of papers, focusing on the geo-political developments in the fourth century, starts off with an exposé by Hervé Inglebert. His contribution is chosen as a key paper to this entire volume, since it addresses a broad range of issues concerning unity in the Later Roman Empire on a conceptual level and showed its potential to incite discussion at the conference. Inglebert emphasizes the different angles from which the concept of unity can be approached. He distinguishes the *unicité* (indivisibility), *unité* (unity) and *unification* of the empire. It was inconceivable for Romans to think of a divided empire, especially in the fourth century, as Inglebert argues. Therefore, even though at that time the empire was actually divided into several regions and the army was commanded by several commanders, it was considered to be undivided. This strong belief in the unity of the empire was not only a *chimaera* of Romans

who could not bear the reality of an empire seriously threatened from both the inside and outside. It also existed in reality in institutions that continued to exist in the entire empire (e.g. jurisdiction, commerce and shared values). Moreover, in several respects the actual unity within the empire increased during the fourth century. Examples include the prominent position taken by the Latin language in the East, the disappearance of local mint and local law and the expansion of the imperial administration. Amidst these contradictory developments of further integration and (seeming) desintegration, the widespread traditional idea of an undivided empire was easily upheld. Hearts and minds were similar in the West and in the East to a significant degree (unification).

While the importance of the church in the politics of the empire augmented, it adopted the same line of thought: only one undivided church existed. Both orthodox and other-minded Christians sought therefore to impose their point of view on the church of a whole instead of trying to start a competing new church (which as a matter of fact many non-orthodox Christians did).

It is this tension between the ideology of undivisibility and the reality of partial disintegration of an empire with only one emperor, one capital and one state that lies at the heart of recurrent discussions about the degree of unity in the later Roman empire. This notion also explains the different opinions on unity that have been brought forward in modern research. Obviously, there is a real danger of judging the late antique empire with hindsight of its definite disintegration in the fifth century. However, for people living within the empire, whose homelands had been part of the empire for centuries, things could well have been different. For many of them, it seems that the disappearance of the empire was inconceivable. And in many respects, continuity was strongly felt.

The formation and consequences of unity are explored in a paper by David Potter. The power and potential of empires is often measured by the size of the army and the tax revenues that are available to sustain it. Potter shows that the ancients were well aware of these criteria. They also realised, especially in the imperial period, that enlarging the empire would exceed its capacities, given that dividing the empire was not an option. The empire was therefore not expanded, because it would not have been able to reach out farther in a stable way. In addition, internal strife is an important indicator of the strength of any empire: the lack of internal unity on a political level explains for a considerable part the weakening of the Roman Empire in the fourth century.

Giusto Traina's geographical focus on the unity of the empire in late antiquity fits Inglebert's exposé closely: he points to the concern for *concordia* among the tetrarchs, but also to the idea of indivisibility. Yet, at the same time, the imperial administration seems to stimulate division on a practical level. By

contrast, unification is growing in the fourth century due to the rise of pilgrimage, which brought Christians from the West to the farthest corners of the empire (Palestine) to see the holy places of Christianity, and people from the East to Rome, where so many martyrs were buried.

Josef Rist explores the relationship between political and ecclesiastical unity in the years following the death of Constantine. The council of Serdica in 343 is the main focus of his paper. Whereas generally two parties, geographically separated between East and West, are discerned, Rist shows that reality was more complex. Most bishops present at the meeting from the West spoke Greek and the theological stand they adopted was basically the same as that of a Greek theologian, Marcellus of Ancyra. Nevertheless, the council ended in a debacle. The unity of the church was broken, due to a dispute on one of the most important aspects of Christian dogma, the nature of God. The indivisibility of the church was of course maintained on a theoretical level, but differences between the East and West were undeniable. The emerging position of Rome as leading bishopric of the church, which bishops in the West were inclined to accept and stimulate, whereas in the East the matter was viewed differently, added to the feeling that developments in the middle of the fourth century drove away from both unity and unification.

Jan Willem Drijvers puts the *divisio regni* of 364 into perspective by showing how it was foreshadowed by other events from the third century onwards. Political and administrative unity was not to be considered absolute, as Inglebert also points out. Nevertheless, inhabitants of the empire most probably felt unity rather than division, also after Valentinian chose the western part of the empire and granted the eastern part to his brother. Valentinian's soldiers demanded a second ruler. This is a remarkable proof of the complete acceptance of several rulers in one empire in the fourth century. The poem of Ausonius, comparing the three-headed government to the Trinity being one, is another telling example. Both examples proof the sense of *unicité* or indivisibility and unification that pervaded late antique ideas about the empire.

Unity in The Fourth Century: Four Case-studies

The geo-political reality at the imperial court and in ecclesiastical hierarchy had of course consequences for all layers of the Roman population. The second part of the volume examines both the reality and perception of these consequences by way of four case-studies.

In discussions on the unity of the Roman Empire Constantinople has a prominent role. The ambitions and intentions of its founder and subsequent

rulers are heavily debated. The city at the Bosphorus can therefore not be absent from the present book. Gitte Lønstrup dal Santo investigates the Christian symbols of Roman unity *par excellence*: the apostles Peter and Paul. She demonstrates how the apostles played an important part in the new Rome. The church in the Triconch, dedicated to Peter and Paul, was a cultural symbol of the unity in the empire. A sense of Romanness was transported to a new city, that was to become the capital of the Byzantine Empire for another 1000 years. Without the political unity promoted and realised by the Theodosian house, it would have been difficult and rather inappropriate to transport the cult of the *concordia apostolorum* to the city of Constantinople.

Whereas sports have an enormous impact in the modern world of today, its role in the construction of unity in the Roman empire seems to have been restricted, appearing from the contribution by Sofie Remijsen. Although games in the later empire became more universal and Greek characteristics gave way to Roman practices, this rather seems to have been a matter of two coinciding developments than the result of a romanization process. This case illustrates the formal unity that still consisted and sometimes even expanded – as Inglebert pointed out already – without any political or other intentional policy being involved.

A peculiar aspect of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity is the outstanding role of eunuchs. The influential role of Eutropius at the Eastern court was heavily criticised by the Western court poet Claudian. Shaun Tougher investigates the implications of the poet's orientalist invectives against the eunuch. Claudian, himself stemming from Egypt, wrote for the court of Stilicho in Milan and emphasised differences with the court of Arcadius in Constantinople. He acknowledges the existence of two empires, but this should not be, since he explicitly seeks the unity of one united empire under the rule of his master Stilicho. Claudian's attacks on Eutropius are tendentious, since he presents the eunuch as a symbol of the deprevated East, while eunuchs served both the Western and Eastern courts in the fourth century. It was thus a shared common culture (unification), which Claudian sought to obscure, in order to create the unity he aspired to.

For Prudentius, Rome as the unchallenged cultural capital of the empire and also the core of Romanness was central to his poetry, as is shown by Christian Gnllka. Prudentius suggests that the emperor Theodosius succeeded in converting almost the entire city of Rome by a speech (*Contra Symmachum* 1.506–631). In this way, the poet betrays his longing for one Christian Roman empire on earth. He was not satisfied to wait for the heavenly kingdom, but proclaimed an ever-lasting empire in the here and now, ruled by the emperor he admired: Theodosius I. The need for *concordia* – hinted at by Inglebert

already – was also felt by the Christian poet, who considered it a necessity from a theological point of view. Surely, Prudentius knew that his ideals were not met in the way he described them, but by writing down his *Idealbild* of society, he testifies for the unification of the empire, which remained, all actual problems notwithstanding.

Notably, all contributors turn out to follow Inglebert's focus on the unity of the empire, rather than its division. Underneath a seemingly constantly disintegrating political and administrative level – similar developments occurring from the end of the third century onwards already – the sense of indivisibility and cultural unity was stronger. A analysis of many different aspects of the Roman Empire in the fourth century – as is offered in this volume – emphasises that the break in 395 was most probably not of large influence in the perception of most inhabitants of the empire. They were used to political division and administrative separation, and felt foremost a sense of romanness that resulted in a stronger sense of unity than any government could guarantee.

It is the ambition of both contributors and editors of this volume to have contributed to the debate concerning empire and identity in the fourth century, a relevant and fascinating though puzzling period of Roman history. At the same time, current debates about the need for unity – both within Europe and between Europe and the East – seem ubiquitous, and thus research into the unity of the Roman Empire in the fourth century might even inspire and nourish more actual discussions about the topic.

PART 1

Geo-political Developments



Les discours de l'unité romaine au quatrième siècle

Hervé Inglebert

Le problème de l'unité de l'Empire romain concerne par définition des thèmes qui excèdent les dimensions provinciale ou régionale qui formaient la plupart des cadres de vie des habitants de l'Empire. Mais ce dernier n'était pas pour autant une superstructure étatique contrôlant de manière parasitaire un monde de cités. Il fut au contraire un élément structurant essentiel du monde antique dont il permit le développement socio-économique et civique par une intégration fiscale et commerciale sans précédent. Aussi, sa disparition en Occident au cinquième siècle eut-elle des conséquences importantes en termes de richesses¹ et de structures sociales.²

La question de l'unité romaine au quatrième siècle peut être abordée de deux manières. Ou bien on étudie la combinaison des aspects politiques, militaires et administratifs, voire religieux et culturels, qui conduisirent à l'apparition, au renforcement, puis à la séparation des deux parties, occidentale et orientale, de l'Empire. Ou bien on analyse la manière dont les Romains ont conçu ces évolutions. Or, on aboutit à une conclusion paradoxale : alors que les historiens de Rome se sont focalisés depuis la Renaissance sur la division de l'Empire, prélude à sa disparition en Occident, les sources antiques des quatrième et cinquième siècles insistent au contraire sur l'évidente unité du monde romain. Les Romains ont eu conscience du processus de division, mais il leur apparaissait secondaire.

Il n'y avait pourtant là nulle contradiction. Du point de vue du pouvoir, il y a bien eu successivement dualité des empereurs, des capitales, des sénats, des administrations, des armées, et souvent des grands conciles qui étaient convoqués et organisés par les empereurs, ce qui a mené à la progressive constitution des deux *partes imperii*, des tétrarques aux fils de Théodose. Mais de nombreuses réalités restaient communes, comme la citoyenneté, l'espace de circulation des personnes, des produits et des idées, ou l'idéal civique local. Et d'autres se renforcèrent, comme l'unité juridique, manifestée ensuite par la publication du Code Théodosien, ou la connaissance du latin parmi les élites

1 Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2005).

2 Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2005).

orientales. Enfin, de nouveaux discours unitaires apparurent, sur la *Romania* (voir *infra*), ou sur l'unité de l'Église, proclamée de Nicée (325) ou Constantinople (381), qui contribuèrent à développer un monde mental commun.

Afin de mieux prendre en compte ces différents aspects, il est utile de distinguer l'unicité, l'unité et l'unification du monde romain. L'unicité du monde romain renvoyait à son indivisibilité, et ceci était un principe qui n'était pas discutable : l'*imperium Romanum*, aux deux sens du pouvoir impérial et de l'empire romain territorial, ne pouvait être qu'un. Selon les époques, l'unicité du pouvoir impérial a pu être assurée par plusieurs empereurs, et celle du territoire par plusieurs *partes*. Mais le principe unitaire de l'*imperium* fut toujours réaffirmé par des moyens politiques (l'Auguste senior légitimait les autres en les choisissant ou en les reconnaissant) et rhétoriques (l'affirmation constante de la *Concordia Augustorum*, sauf en cas de guerre civile). Quant à l'unité du monde romain, elle était concrète et relevait généralement du pouvoir impérial : elle était politique (avec un seul empereur ou plusieurs empereurs d'une même famille), monétaire (un système commun, fondé à l'époque sur le *solidus*), juridique (un même droit public et privé). Mais dans certains domaines, comme celui du grand commerce ou des affaires ecclésiastiques, l'unité concrète ne dépendait pas que du pouvoir impérial. Enfin, l'unification du monde romain fut surtout celle, subjective, des mentalités, qui dépendaient à la fois du principe unitaire et des réalisations concrètes de l'unité. Il faut bien distinguer le principe unitaire de l'empire, les unités concrètes du monde romain, et les représentations mentales de celle-ci.³ On va désormais étudier les relations entre ces différents aspects en traitant d'abord les évolutions des troisième-quatrième siècles, puis les discours unitaires au quatrième siècle.

I Les évolutions des troisième-quatrième siècles

1 *Le partitum imperium*

Le thème du *partitum imperium* est fort ancien, car Tite Live le signalait déjà lors de la guerre d'Hannibal, en 209 avant J.-C., lorsque les consuls partagèrent régionalement l'*imperium* en Italie du sud,⁴ ce qui était différent du partage chronologique habituel d'une journée sur deux entre les magistrats. L'idée était que l'*imperium* comme sphère de compétence était un et indivisible, mais

3 Pour un exemple de la nécessaire prise en compte des mentalités des contemporains, Hervé Inglebert, "Introduction: Late Antique Conceptions of Late Antiquity," dans *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. S.F. Johnson (New York, 2012), pp. 3–30.

4 Tite Live 27.7.7.

qu'il pouvait être partagé en deux aires géographique d'application. Ce schéma a persisté jusqu'à la fin de l'empire romain. Il a pu exister diverses *partes*, mais il n'y avait qu'un seul *imperium Romanum*, qu'une seule *res publica*. Ceci est particulièrement net lorsqu'on étudie les phénomènes dit d'usurpation. Tout prétendant à la pourpre visait à dominer seul la totalité de l'Empire. Au troisième siècle, il n'y a pas eu un « empire des Gaules » de Postumus, ni un « empire de Palmyre » de Wahballath.⁵ Un empire romain sécessionniste ou une pluralité d'empires romains étaient des non-sens idéologiques.

Si on écarte le sens de *pars* comme région de l'empire,⁶ partage du pouvoir⁷ et les significations annexes,⁸ l'utilisation de *pars imperii* au sens de partie territoriale de l'empire semble tardive. Vers 315, dans son *De mortibus persecutorum*, Lactance accuse Dioclétien d'avoir divisé l'*orbis* en quatre parties⁹ ; mais il ne s'agissait là que de quatre zones stratégiques d'un même empire, ce que comprenait Lactance en insistant sur l'existence de quatre armées. Il en était de même vers 400 dans l'*Epitome de Caesaribus*, à propos des trois fils de Constantin,¹⁰ qui décrit des régions, mais non des entités administratives structurées. En revanche, vers 413, Augustin d'Hippone mentionne les deux parties de l'empire romain en lien avec les deux empereurs.¹¹ Et ailleurs, il parle

- 5 Voir Michel Christol, *L'empire romain du III^e siècle* (Paris, 1997), et David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180–395* (London, 2004). Sur Zénobie, Annie et Maurice Sartre, *Zénobie de Palmyre à Rome* (Paris, 2014).
- 6 Velleius Paterculus 2.97.1, éd. et trad. Joseph Hellegouerc'h, *Velleius Paterculus, Histoire romaine* (Paris, 1982) : *Sed dum in hac parte imperii omnia geruntur prosperrime* ; « Pendant que dans cette partie de l'Empire, toutes les opérations étaient couronnées de succès... ».
- 7 Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 12.9, éd. et trad. Michel Festy, *Pseudo-Aurélius Victor, Abrégé des Césars* (Paris, 1999) : *Hic Traianum in liberi locum inque partem imperii cooptavit; cum quo tribus vixit mensibus* ; « Il (Nerva) adopta Trajan, l'associa à l'empire, et vécut avec lui trois mois ».
- 8 Le terme a pu désigner le parti autant que la partie, voir Tacite, *Histoires* 4.70 : *in partes Vespasiani*.
- 9 Lactance, *De mortibus persecutorum* 7, édition et traduction de J. Moreau, *Lactance, De la mort des persécuteurs* (Paris, 1954) : *Tres enim participes regni sui fecit in quattuor partes orbe diviso et multiplicatis exercitibus* ; « Il associa en effet trois princes à son pouvoir divisant le monde en quatre parties et multipliant le nombre des armées ».
- 10 Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 41.20 : *Hi singuli has partes regendas habuerunt* ; « Chacun eut à gouverner les régions suivantes ».
- 11 À propos de Théodose et de Valentinien II, Augustin, *De civitate Dei* 5.26, éd. B. Dombart et A. Kalb, trad. G. Combès : *Unde et ille non solum uiuo seruauit quam debebat fidem, uerum etiam post eius mortem pulsum ab eius interfectore Maximo Valentinianum eius paruulum fratrem in sui partes imperii tamquam christianus exceptit pupillum (...) Mox*

de « l'empereur oriental » ou de « la partie orientale » en désignant l'autre moitié du monde romain.¹² Mais cette division entre Occident et Orient ne recouvrait pas toujours les autres sens d'*Oriens* en latin.¹³

Ceci signifie que pour les auteurs anciens, l'essentiel était non la présence d'une capitale ou d'une administration territoriale, mais celle d'un empereur. Le nombre des empereurs déterminait le nombre des *partes*, et celles-ci avaient d'abord une signification politique et militaire. On peut penser que l'existence de deux structures administratives a contribué après 360 à fixer le nombre d'empereurs à deux. Mais cela n'était pas une nécessité ; on ne sait si Julien ou Jovien auraient rapidement choisi un collègue, et Honorius a nommé Auguste Constance III. On pouvait donc avoir deux *partes* et un seul empereur, ou deux empereurs associés dans une seule *pars*.

2 L'unité territoriale

La question de l'unité territoriale de l'empire a été posée de diverses manières aux troisième-quatrième siècles. La première fut purement politique, mais resta marginale. Il s'agit de la situation décrite par Hérodién à la mort de Sep-

tyranni Maximi extincor Valentinianum puerum imperii sui partibus, unde fugatus fuerat, cum misericordissima ueneratione restituit ; « Il (Théodose) ne se contenta d'ailleurs pas de lui (Gratien) conserver sa fidélité de son vivant. Après sa mort, quand Maxime son meurtrier chassa son jeune frère Valentinien, il recueillit celui-ci comme pupille et chrétien dans sa partie de l'empire. (...) Vainqueur du tyran Maxime, il rétablit avec tous les témoignages d'une respectueuse compassion le jeune Valentinien dans la partie de l'empire dont il avait été chassé ».

- 12 Augustin, *Sermon* 46, éd. C. Lambot (Turnhout, 1954), trad. H. Inglebert : *Ubi sit Cyrene, forte nescis : Lybia est, Pentapolis est, contigua est Africae, ad orientem magis pertinet ; uel in distributione prouinciarum imperatorum cognosce : imperator orientalis mittit iudicem ad Cyrenen (...) Orientalis est. Lybia enim duobus modis dicitur, uel ista quae proprie Africa est, uel illa orientis pars, quae contigua est Africae, et omnino collimitanea*. "Ignore-rai-tu où est Cyrène ? Elle est en Libye, en Pentapole, et, proche de l'Afrique, relève en fait de l'Orient. Apprends-le au moins de la répartition des provinces des empereurs : c'est l'empereur oriental qui envoie un gouverneur à Cyrène (...) Il (Symon de Cyrène) est oriental. Car il y a deux Libyes, l'une est vraiment en Afrique, et l'autre dans la partie orientale, tout près et vraiment limitrophe de l'Afrique".
- 13 Hervé Inglebert, "Pars oceani orientalis : les conceptions de l'Orient chez les géographes de l'Antiquité tardive," dans *Antiquités Sémitiques 2 : Des Sumériens aux Romains d'orient : la perception géographique du monde : espaces et territoires au Proche-Orient ancien : actes de la table-ronde du 16 novembre 1996 / organisée par l'URA 1062 «Études sémitiques»*, éd. A. Sérandour (Paris, 1997), pp. 177–98.

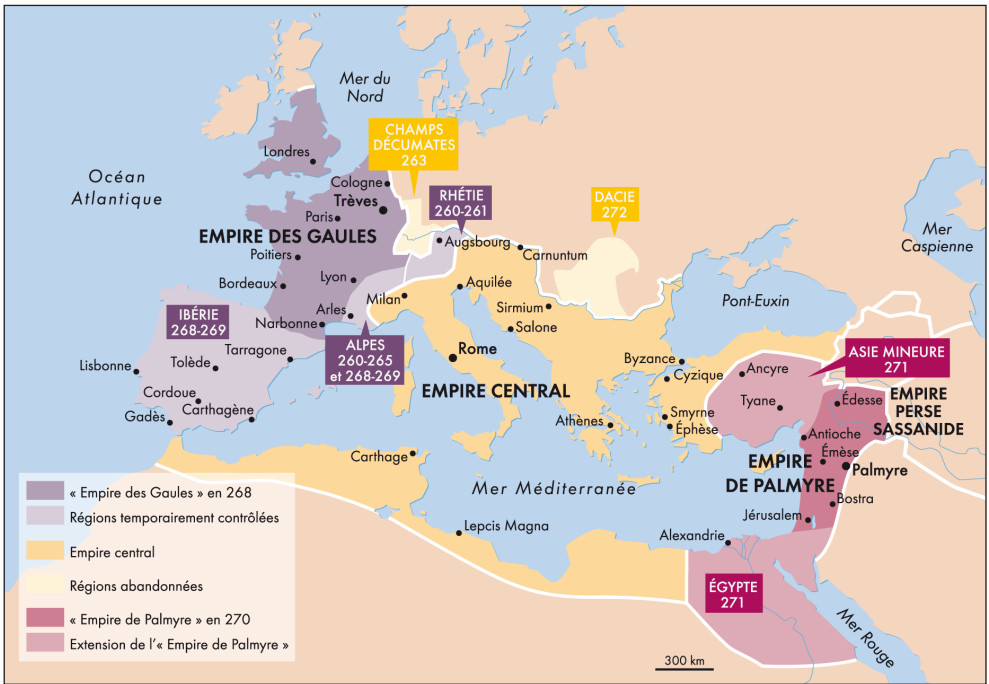
time Sévère en 211. D'après l'historien, qui écrivait vers 245,¹⁴ on pensa alors diviser l'empire en deux parties, européenne et asiatique, avec deux capitales, – Rome en Occident, et Alexandrie ou Antioche en Orient, ce qui pouvait s'inspirer du temps d'Octavien et de Marc Antoine – deux armées, mais aussi deux sénats. L'assassinat de Géta par Caracalla mit fin à ce projet ; la division envisagée fut rejetée au motif que le pouvoir suprême ne se partageait pas.

La seconde fut stratégique. Elle naquit de la tension entre l'unicité du pouvoir impérial et la pluralité des fronts régionaux. Les armées romaines étaient provinciales et dépendaient de leur gouverneur,¹⁵ mais il existait parfois des contextes particuliers où il fallait organiser des commandements régionaux unifiés. Dans un cadre offensif, la logique voulait que l'empereur s'en chargeât personnellement, comme le firent Domitien ou Trajan, ou qu'il délèguât un tel *imperium* à un membre de sa famille, comme ce fut le cas au début de l'Empire avec Agrippa, Drusus, Tibère ou Germanicus. Mais lorsque le danger menaçait plusieurs fronts, l'empereur, chef suprême des armées, devait parfois déléguer un pouvoir militaire important à un général compétent, ce qui créait un risque de révolte et de guerre civile. Pour éviter celles-ci, on avait pu au Haut Empire confier des armées nombreuses à quelqu'un qui, faute d'un important réseau politique au sein du Sénat, ne pouvait se révolter, ce qui explique en 66 le choix d'envoyer Vespasien en Judée contre les Judéens révoltés. Cette solution ne fut plus efficace après 235 lorsque l'appui de l'armée devint suffisant pour prendre le pouvoir, comme le montra l'accession au trône de Maximin de Thrace. La meilleure solution fut alors de confier un grand commandement à un membre de la famille impériale associé au pouvoir (c'était déjà le cas sous Marc Aurèle avec Lucius Verus ; on eut ensuite les exemples de Priscus, frère de Philippe ; de Gallien, fils de Valérien ; de Carin fils de Carus ; et ensuite du système diarchique et tétrarchique de Dioclétien). Selon les périodes, le nombre d'empereurs a pu varier de deux à quatre, en particulier à cause du danger variable des fronts rhénan et danubien.¹⁶ Enfin, on devait parfois confier un grand com-

14 Hérodien, *Histoire des empereurs romains* 4.3.5–7. Caracalla aurait reçu l'Europe, Géta l'Asie, la frontière étant sur les détroits du Bosphore et des Dardanelles, avec deux garnisons antagonistes à Byzance et Chalcédoine ; l'Afrique du nord aurait été partagée selon la frontière administrative linguistique, l'Égypte et la Cyrénaïque revenant à Géta.

15 Au Haut-Empire, les provinces les plus importantes regroupaient trois légions, soit, avec les corps auxiliaires rattachés, environ 10% des soldats romains, et en temps ordinaire, cela n'était pas suffisant pour se révolter, sauf en cas de crise de succession. Mais après la guerre civile de 193–197, Septime Sévère limita à deux le nombre maximal de légions dans les provinces (division de la Bretagne, de la Syrie et de la Pannonie).

16 Le Rhin était devenu un front secondaire depuis la fin du premier siècle de notre ère, et sous Marc Aurèle, le danger venait du Danube et de l'Orient. Le front du Rhin ne redevint



CARTE 1.1 *Un problème stratégique : la guerre sur trois fronts Vers 270, la fragmentation de l'Empire est une solution politique.* SOURCE : HERVÉ INGLEBERT, *ATLAS DE ROME ET DES BARBARES, III^E-VI^E SIÈCLE. LA FIN DE L'EMPIRE ROMAIN EN OCCIDENT* (PARIS, 1999), P. 26.

mandement sur le seul critère de la compétence, ce qui entraînait souvent une usurpation (sous Marc Aurèle avec Avidius Cassius, sous Philippe avec Pacatien et Dèce).

La troisième façon d'aborder la question de l'unité territoriale de l'empire fut administrative. La création des préfectures régionales du prétoire à partir

dangereux qu'au début du troisième siècle, ce qui justifia les interventions de Caracalla et de Maximin, et surtout après 255, durant une vingtaine d'années. Gallien et ses fils furent en Italie du nord, de façon à intervenir sur le Rhin et le Danube grâce à un *comitatus* mobile, ou sur le Rhin de 255 à 260. Après 260, la situation de crise sur le Rhin justifia « l'empire gaulois », Gallien étant retenu sur le Danube pour protéger l'Italie. Après 275, la situation fut plus calme sur le Rhin et le Danube, et on retrouva la dualité stratégique qui avait existé entre Valérien (en Orient contre les Sassanides) et Gallien (en Occident sur le Rhin et le Danube), avec Carus et Carin, puis avec Dioclétien et Maximien. Mais avec ces derniers, les secteurs de responsabilité avaient changé ; on avait désormais un empereur chargé de l'Orient et du Bas-Danube, et un autre chargé du Rhin et du Haut-Danube. Ceci continua ensuite avec Galère et Constance Chlore, puis Licinius et Constantin.



CARTE 1.2 *Un problème stratégique : la guerre sur trois fronts. Vers 340, les préfetures régionales du Prétoire sont une solution administrative.* SOURCE : HERVÉ INGLEBERT, *ATLAS DE ROME ET DES BARBARES, III^E-VI^E SIÈCLE. LA FIN DE L'EMPIRE ROMAIN EN OCCIDENT* (PARIS, 1999), p. 27.

de 325 fut un processus complexe, car, comme l'a montré Pierfrancesco Porena, leur nombre varia selon la logique stratégique des trois fronts, les héritages tétrarchiques et l'adaptation politique au nombre des héritiers de Constantin.¹⁷ En effet, l'existence des douze diocèses créés par Dioclétien permettait différents types de découpages. La logique stratégique des trois grandes préfetures du prétoire qui s'imposa après 340 reprenait de fait la division politique des années 270 (voir cartes 1.1 et 1.2). Mais elle tenait compte de la réflexion tétrarchique qui avait rassemblé l'Orient et le Bas-Danube dans un même ensemble défensif. Ceci amena l'installation durable d'une résidence impériale sur les détroits, avec Nicomédie d'abord, et Constantinople ensuite. Mais le rang de nouvelle capitale attribuée à celle-ci eut des conséquences immédiates, fiscales avec l'attribution de l'annone d'Égypte au ravitaillement de Constanti-

17 Pierfrancesco Porena, *Le origini della prefettura del pretorio tardoantica* (Rome, 2003), pp. 563–575.

nople, et honorifiques avec la création d'un Sénat de Constantinople.¹⁸ À cela s'ajoutèrent ensuite la création de deux ordres sénatoriaux équivalents par Constance II, et la partition de l'armée de campagne de Julien après la mort de Jovien en 364. Mais si on avait désormais deux empereurs, deux capitales, deux administrations, deux armées, et en un mot, deux *partes*, l'existence des trois préfectures régionales perpétuèrent jusqu'en 395, date de la division de l'Illyricum, un avantage territorial, qui existait depuis 316¹⁹ en faveur de l'Occident. Mais la limite de 395 entre les deux *partes* n'était ni nécessaire, ni définitive. La mort de Théodose avait été imprévue, Gildon révolté en 397 voulut faire allégeance à Constantinople, et Stilichon allié à Alaric aurait pu modifier les équilibres stratégiques dans les Balkans après 400. Seules les invasions de 407 en Gaule détournèrent l'Occident de ses ambitions dans l'Illyricum.

3 *Les facteurs d'unification*

Le fait que ces évolutions furent en partie accidentelles et qu'elles n'aient concerné que certains domaines explique que la structuration progressive des deux *partes* ne fut pas comprise par les contemporains comme une remise en cause de l'unité du monde romain. En effet, les éléments de continuité l'emportaient : l'unité juridique, celle, commerciale, de la Méditerranée, et la permanence des valeurs communes, l'idéal civique, le goût des spectacles, le rôle des aristocraties et de la culture classique.

De plus, il exista de nouveaux et puissants facteurs d'unification aux troisième-quatrième siècles : l'extension de la citoyenneté romaine en 212 ; la crise des années 249–275, où les élites civiques, du Rhin à Palmyre via Athènes, durent choisir entre Rome et ses ennemis, et choisirent toujours Rome ; la disparition des particularismes civiques (les monnayages locaux après 260, pour des raisons économiques, et les droits locaux après 280, par décision impériale) ; le rôle croissant du latin et du droit romain dans la formation des élites orientales à partir de Dioclétien ; la fin des privilèges fiscaux italiens sous Dioclétien, et la provincialisation *de facto* de l'Italie ; la création d'une administration d'empire plus nombreuse et plus professionnelle sous Dioclétien et Constantin ; la création d'un nouvel ordre sénatorial élargi par Constantin.

18 Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974) ; L. Grig and G. Kelly eds., *Two Romes. Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2012).

19 Émilienne Demougeot, "Le partage des provinces de l'Illyricum entre la pars occidentis et la pars orientis, de la Tétrarchie au règne de Théodoric," dans s.n., *La géographie administrative et politique d'Alexandre à Mahomet, Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (14–16 juin 1979)* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 229–53.

Ainsi, s'il exista au quatrième siècle des facteurs concrets, principalement stratégiques, de partition entre Orient et Occident, ceci ne concerna que l'appareil d'état (la capitale, l'annone, l'administration, l'armée de chaque *pars*), mais ne remit en question ni le principe de l'unicité impériale, ni l'unification de plus en plus importante des mentalités autour des valeurs romaines partagées.

II Les discours unificateurs

On connaît toute l'ambiguïté du thème de la *concordia* à Rome, que l'on invoquait surtout lorsque régnait la discorde, comme le montrèrent la reconstruction (ou la construction) du temple de *Concordia* après la mort de Caius Gracchus,²⁰ et le développement du thème de la *concordia* chez Cicéron durant les guerres civiles.²¹ Sous l'Empire, le discours politique et idéologique sur la *Concordia* persista,²² et le terme prit alors deux grandes significations. D'une part, il désignait une vertu divine, dont l'empereur manifestait les bienfaits, parfois appelée *Concordia Augusta*, ou *Concordia Augusti*, généralement représentée par le type d'une Concorde en train de sacrifier. De l'autre, il signifiait une entente humaine, souvent symbolisée par la *unctio dextrarum*.²³ Sur la plupart des monnaies, on trouve en fait *Concordia Exercitum* ou *Concordia Militum*, afin de montrer les relations supposées idéales entre l'empereur avec les soldats qui fondaient, en dernier recours, son pouvoir.

Le thème de la *Concordia Augustorum* n'avait de sens que s'il existait au moins deux Augustes, et il n'apparut donc qu'avec Marc Aurèle et Lucius Verus

20 Ines d'Arco, *Il culto della Concordia e la lotta politica tra IV e II sec. A. C.* (Rome, 1998).

21 Philippe Akar, *La Concordia à la fin de la République romaine* (2008, Thèse Paris I, non publiée). Voir également Hermann Strasburger, *Concordia ordinum, eine Untersuchung zur Politik Ciceros* (Frankfurt am Main, 1931) et Ettore Lepore, *Il Princeps ciceroniano egli ideali politici della tarda Repubblica* (Naples, 1954).

22 Paola Zanzarri, *La Concordia romana : politica e ideologia nella monetazione dalla tarda Repubblica ai Severi* (Rome, 1997) ; Frédéric Hurlet, "Le consensus et la concordia en Occident (premier – troisième siècles ap. J.-C.). Réflexions sur la diffusion de l'idéologie imperial," dans *Idéologies et valeurs civiques dans le monde romain*, éd. H. Inglebert (Paris, 2002), pp. 163–178 ; John Alexander Lobur, *Consensus, Concordia, and the formation of Roman imperial ideology* (New York, 2008) ; Céline Solmy Fauque de Jonquières, *Consensus et Concordia de la fin de la République à la mort d'Alexandre Sévère* (2008, Thèse Paris IV, non publiée).

23 Sylvie Baudemont Guenaire, *La représentation de Concordia dans l'art romain* (1986, Thèse Paris IV, non publiée).

(see fig. 6.2, p. 103). Ce thème officiel fut présent surtout sur les monnayages, et secondairement dans l'épigraphie (quelques inscriptions, de Marc Aurèle et Lucius Verus à Valentinien et Valens).²⁴ Comme chaque Auguste détenait l'*imperium* militaire, la concorde était absolument nécessaire pour éviter la guerre civile. Elle était donc affirmée pour rassurer les soldats ou les populations, ou était revendiquée par les usurpateurs désireux de se faire reconnaître comme légitimes.

La thématique de la *concordia* a connu un développement important sous la tétrarchie, où elle est manifestée sur les monnaies, mais aussi dans les panégyriques latins et dans les groupes sculptés des tétrarques. Ceci s'explique pour deux raisons. D'une part, le système tétrarchique réunissait au sein du collège impérial des hommes qui, à la différence des Augustes des deuxième et troisième siècles, n'appartenaient pas à la même famille, même s'ils étaient ensuite unis après leur désignation par des liens matrimoniaux et idéologiques. D'autre part, la répartition des tâches militaires, puis des zones administratives, prit des formes institutionnalisées qui n'existaient pas aux époques précédentes et qui purent être présentées par Lactance comme une partition de l'Empire. Le thème de la *concordia* fut ensuite secondaire sous Constantin, empereur unique, avant de redevenir courant ensuite jusqu'à la fin de l'Empire.²⁵ Il est certain que la *Concordia Augustorum* fut facilitée de 324 à 455 par l'appartenance des empereurs aux dynasties constantinienne, valentinienne et théodosienne, car la légitimité familiale permit d'écarter des prétendants comme Magnence, Maxime, Eugène ou Jean.²⁶

Mais l'existence de divers empereurs et ensuite des *partes imperii* comme structures administratives ne remettait pas en cause l'unicité et l'unité du monde romain. Cela est manifeste par exemple chez Eutrope, qui mentionnait vers 369 les divers partages ou règnes partagés, tout en signalant toujours au

24 Marc Aurèle et Lucius Verus : AE (1933) 00119 (Aquincum) ; CIL 08.08300 (Cuicul). Septime Sévère, Caracalla et Julia Domna : CIL 08.17289 (Thamugadi) ; Valentinien et Valens : AE (1895) 00108 (Thamugadi).

25 Les chrétiens de Rome reprirent le thème de la *Concordia Apostolorum* pour l'opposer à la discorde romaine, principalement celle de Romulus et Rémus : J.M. Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum: Christian propaganda at Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries: a study in early Christian iconography and iconology* (Oxford, 1982) ; voir aussi Charles Pietri, "Concordia apostolorum et renovatio Urbis (Culte des martyrs et propagande pontificale)," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 73 (1961), 275–322, repris dans *Roma Christiana : recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie, de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)* (Rome, 1976), pp. 1583–1596.

26 Le cas de l'usurpation de Julien en 360–361 est différent, car il était un cousin de Constance II.

singulier l'existence de l'*imperium Romanum*,²⁷ de l'*orbis Romanus*,²⁸ de la *res publica*²⁹ ou de la *res Romana*.³⁰ Le discours politique de la *Concordia Augustorum* officielle ne faisait que proclamer, au-delà des divisions politiques, et malgré les guerres civiles, l'unité d'un même monde. L'existence des *partes* n'a jamais remis en cause l'unité idéologique de l'Empire.

Le discours sur l'unité de l'Église était ancien et fut systématiquement utilisé contre ceux que l'on accusait d'être hérétiques ou schismatiques.³¹ Le thème de la catholicité pouvait recevoir un sens géographique majoritaire, ou un sens essentialiste minoritaire lié à la préservation de la pureté doctrinale, comme ce fut le cas pour les donatistes. Dans son acception géographique, les chrétiens pouvaient penser, depuis le deuxième siècle, que l'empire du Christ était plus vaste que celui de Rome, et ceci est toujours attesté aux quatrième et cinquième siècles.³²

Dans sa relation avec l'Empire romain, le christianisme pouvait être perçu comme un facteur de fragmentation de la société romaine, ce contre quoi réagirent certains empereurs comme Valérien et les tétrarques. Mais l'idée d'un empire démoniaque avait peu à peu disparu au troisième siècle et après 300, certains en vinrent à penser qu'il existait un lien privilégié entre le monothéisme et la monarchie impériale (Eusèbe de Césarée), puis entre le christianisme et l'empereur (à partir de Constantin), et enfin entre l'unité de l'Église et celle de l'Empire (Optat de Milève). On construisit ainsi peu à peu de Constantin à Théodose le modèle dominant de l'empire romain chrétien, de type eusé-

27 Eutrope, 10.13.

28 Eutrope, 10.1.

29 Eutrope, 10.1 ; 10.4 ; 10.9.

30 Eutrope, 10.6.

31 Un bon exemple en fut le traité de Cyprien, *De unitate ecclesiae*, qui connut deux variantes selon ses relations avec les évêques de Rome ; voir P. Siniscalco, P. Mattei, M. Poirier éd., *Cyprien de Carthage, L'unité de l'Église*, Sources Chrétiennes 500 (Paris, 2006).

32 On peut penser à Rufin d'Aquilée et aux conversions des Géorgiens, des Sarracènes et des Axoumites ; cf. Françoise Thélamon, *Païens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle. L'apport de l'Histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Paris, 1981). On peut aussi raisonner à partir des langues : Augustin, *Sermon Dolbeau* 24.2, mentionnait comme langues ecclésiastiques catholiques celles des Latins, des Grecs, des Puniques, des Hébreux, des Syriens, des Indiens, des Cappadociens et des Égyptiens. Apponius, *In canticum canticorum* 90, éd. B. de Vréville et L. Neyrand, CCL 19:308–9 (Turnhout, 1986), citait comme langues de la prédication évangélique l'hébreu, le grec, l'égyptien, le copte, le latin, et l'assyrienne, l'araméen devenu ensuite le syriaque. Pour un commentaire de ces textes, Hervé Inglebert, "Universalité chrétienne et monarchie impériale romaine d'après les Sermons Dolbeau 22, 24, 25", dans G. Madec éd., *Augustin prédicateur (395–411)* (Paris, 1998), pp. 449–70.

bien.³³ Les empereurs étaient soucieux de l'unité de l'Église pour des raisons d'ordre public, et parce qu'ils pensaient ainsi être agréables au Dieu qui les protégeait. Mais les chrétiens étaient incapables de s'entendre et les prétentions de l'évêque de Rome à être supérieur aux autres dans les domaines théologique et disciplinaire n'étaient acceptées ni en Orient, ni même en Afrique. Et c'est parce qu'ils furent sollicités comme juges par les évêques que les empereurs durent intervenir dans les affaires de l'Église dès 314 en Occident avec l'affaire donatiste, puis dès 324 en Orient avec la crise arienne. Pour aboutir à l'unité, les empereurs devaient soit appuyer l'un des partis en présence, et ainsi apparaître comme persécuteur aux yeux des autres, soit tenter de proposer des formules de compromis, ce qui mécontentait tout le monde. Le moyen impérial de gérer ces crises fut le concile universel dont le premier exemple fut Nicée (325). Mais s'il existait deux empereurs, il fallait un accord entre eux pour organiser un concile universel, comme ce fut le cas à Sardique en 343, ou organiser deux conciles régionaux, comme ce fut le cas à Constantinople et Aquilée en 381. Mais même un empereur unique pouvait choisir de procéder par *pars*, comme le fit Constance II avec les conciles de Rimini, Séleucie et Constantinople en 359.

Si l'on met à part le cas donatiste qui divisa l'Afrique de 312 à 411, l'unité théologique chrétienne n'exista à peu près dans l'Empire que de Nicée à Sardique (325–342/43)³⁴ et de Constantinople à Chalcédoine (381–451).³⁵ Comme le discours sur la Concorde, celui sur l'unité de l'Église était généralement développé lors des divisions. Aussi a-t-on ici affaire à un discours certes théologique, mais aux applications essentiellement idéologiques et politiques. Comme l'Empire, l'Église était censée être a priori unitaire, même si ni l'un ni l'autre ne manifestaient une unité concrète durable.

33 Hervé Inglebert, *Les Romains chrétiens face à l'histoire de Rome : histoire, christianisme et romanités en Occident dans l'Antiquité tardive (III^e-V^e siècles)* (Paris, 1996).

34 Voir la contribution de Josef Rist dans ce volume.

35 Au cinquième siècle, l'institutionnalisation de l'église de Perse (reconnaissance comme église nationale en 410, autonomie doctrinale et disciplinaire vis-à-vis d'Antioche en 424, adoption d'une variante théologique antiochienne (« nestorienne ») en 484–86) amena de sa part une distinction nette entre l'Église d'Orient (de l'empire perse sassanide) et l'Église d'Occident (de l'empire romain). Mais cette représentation ne fut pas acceptée en Occident.

Le terme de *Romania* est attesté dans les textes latins, vers 330–340.³⁶ Le terme ne devint courant qu'après 380.³⁷ Le terme était utilisé par opposition aux barbares extérieurs, pour désigner le territoire romain (*orbis Romanus*) et au cinquième siècle, également la puissance romaine (*imperium Romanum*). En grec, le terme signifia le territoire romain à partir de 375–378.

Le thème de la *Romania* renvoyait à la manière dont les habitants de l'Empire se redéfinirent au quatrième siècle.³⁸ Certes, le thème d'un *imperium Romanum* étendant son influence jusqu'aux confins indiens du monde subsista jusqu'à la fin du quatrième siècle, en interprétant les ambassades lointaines comme des signes de soumission, ou en rêvant avec Julien de propager l'hellénisme chez les Perses. Mais de fait, la crise du troisième siècle avait amené la fin des prétentions hégémoniques romaines,³⁹ et le renforcement du sentiment de cohésion entre les habitants de l'empire face aux barbares désormais pensés comme des ennemis dangereux, et non plus comme des étrangers à conquérir.

Ainsi, vers 359, l'auteur de l'*Expositio totius orbis et gentium* marquait bien la différence entre les territoires extérieurs et celui des Romains, en parlant de « notre terre », tout en prenant acte de l'existence des deux pôles de pouvoir en Orient et en Occident.⁴⁰ Vers 390, Ammien Marcellin, en décrivant l'empire sassanide selon un modèle spatial concentrique d'origine perse, admettait l'existence d'un autre monde de fait inassimilable.⁴¹ En 417, Orose signalait le

36 J. Irmscher, "Sulle origini del concetto Romania," dans s.n., *Da Roma alla Terza Roma, III. Popoli e spazio romano tra diritto e profezia* (Napels, 1986), pp. 421–9.

37 Il est employé par l'évêque homéen Maximin lors du concile d'Aquilée en 381, par Ammien Marcellin vers 390 (16.11.7) puis chez Orose en 417 (Orose, 1.3.20 ; 3.7.43).

38 Le *barbaricum* est un terme du deuxième siècle, mais il prit des significations différentes au quatrième siècle en latin (où il désigne l'Europe centrale, mais pas l'empire perse) et en grec (où il s'applique à tous les étrangers, y compris perses).

39 Du moins sous leurs formes politiques traditionnelles. Mais Constantin rénova le thème en se présentant après 324 comme le protecteur des chrétiens partout dans le monde dans une lettre adressée au roi sassanide Shapour II ; cf. Eusèbe de Césarée, *Vie de Constantin*, 4.9–13.

40 *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 21, éd. et trad. Jean Rougé (Paris, 1966) : *Quoniam vero necessarium est et nostram terram, hoc est Romanorum, conscribere* ; « Mais puisqu'il est maintenant nécessaire de décrire notre pays, c'est-à-dire celui des Romains » ; id. 22 : *nostra terra* ; *Expositio* 44 : *aspice in duo comitata orientis quoque et occidentis*, qui renvoie aux deux armées et aux deux entourages de Constance II et Julien.

41 Lionel Mari, *Les représentations de l'espace chez Ammien Marcellin* (1995, Thèse Paris IV, non publiée), exemplaire dactylographié, pp. 620–626 (à paraître chez Latomus). La description chorographique de l'empire perse se trouve en Ammien Marcellin, *Histoires* 23.6. 15–73.

Danube comme limite entre les barbares et « *le côté de notre mer* ». ⁴² Et les empereurs en parlant parfois d'*orbis noster* admettaient qu'il en existait d'autres et que l'*orbis Romanus* pouvait ne pas être équivalent à l'*orbis terrarum*.

Mais un autre facteur amena en particulier les habitants de la partie orientale de l'Empire à se définir comme Romains plus qu'ils ne l'avaient fait auparavant. Jusqu'ici, ils avaient pu être fiers de se faire reconnaître comme Hellènes. Mais après 300, avec la récupération idéologique du terme par les néoplatoniciens, dont Julien fut le plus célèbre, l'hellénisme prit un sens autant religieux que culturel. Aussi, malgré Grégoire de Nazianze, les Orientaux se définirent de moins en moins comme Hellènes et de plus en plus comme Romains, en particulier après 363.

Vers 550 en grec, vers 600 en latin, *Romania* désignait l'empire de Constantinople, dont la Rome de Grégoire le Grand, mais n'incluait plus les régions soumises aux Francs ou aux Wisigoths. ⁴³ En revanche, de 350 à 480, ce terme unifia des populations qui pouvaient relever de divers pouvoirs, mais qui avaient conscience de participer à un même ensemble défini par le droit (celui du Code Théodosien), par la religion (chrétienne nicéenne) et par un lien de fidélité à l'empire de Rome qui les poussait à se définir comme Romains. Alors que l'Empire et l'Église étaient de fait le plus souvent divisés, la *Romania* désignait une unité concrète et définissait de manière spontanée et durable cette communauté d'humains qui se savaient ou se voulaient Romains et non barbares. À la différence des discours officiels sur l'Empire et l'Église, celui sur la *Romania* fut spontané.

⁴² Orose, *Histoires* 1.2.54.

⁴³ Sous Justinien, Procope considérait que les Occidentaux avaient conservé les *nomoi patrioi* (= le droit romain), ce qui les définissait comme Romains ; mais ceci excluait les Berbères de cette définition aux yeux de Constantinople ; voir Yves Modéran, *Les Maures et l'Afrique romaine* (Rome, 2003). Pour Cosmas Indicopleustès, la *Romania* était l'empire de Justinien. À la fin du sixième siècle, les Mérovingiens se sentaient en dehors de la *Romania* (Venance Fortunat) et on s'est ensuite défini comme Francs au nord de la Loire (Pseudo-Frédégaire). Le ralliement des Wisigoths au catholicisme permit aux Espagnols de se définir comme Goths après 587–89. En revanche, le sentiment de romanité persistait en Italie au temps de Grégoire le Grand, mais aussi en Aquitaine ; cf. Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine : des Wisigoths aux Arabes (418–781) : naissance d'une région* (Paris, 1979).

Conclusion

On peut dire qu'au quatrième siècle, les discordes étaient unitaires. En effet, elles ne visaient pas à fragmenter l'empire ou la société romaine, mais à le rendre homogènes. Chaque dirigeant d'une *pars imperii* pouvait songer à réunifier l'Empire. Les chrétiens espéraient bien convertir tout le monde à leur foi, mais Julien pensait la même chose avec son hellénisme rénové. Entre eux, les chrétiens ne cherchaient pas à fonder différentes églises, mais à imposer leur orthodoxie. Au quatrième siècle, aucune guerre civile, aucune différence religieuse ne visait une sécession, et il ne fut de même au cinquième siècle. Il fallut attendre le règne de Justinien, trois générations après Chalcédoine, pour que les miaphysites organisent une autre église concurrente. Les seules véritables différences au sein de l'Empire furent liées à la présence des Germains subordonnés.

En réalité, parce qu'après 300, les habitants de l'empire furent plus proches les uns des autres qu'auparavant, les différences entre Romains devinrent d'autant plus choquantes. Aussi, le quatrième siècle et une grande partie du cinquième siècle ne furent pas l'époque de la division du monde romain, mais au contraire celui de sa plus grande unification mentale, au moins telle qu'elle fut vécue par ses élites, mais aussi concrète. En effet, le fait d'être Romain dépassait alors les clivages entre Latins et Grecs, entre païens et chrétiens. Car à l'unité de l'*imperium Romanum* depuis Auguste, à celle de la *civitas* depuis 212, à celle de la *romanitas* depuis Tertullien, s'était ajoutée celle de la *Romania* au quatrième siècle. Et si le christianisme nicéen devint religion dominante après 391–394, l'unité de culte autour du christianisme ne fut imposée par Justinien que vers 527–529.

C'est bien alors, de 350 à 500, que l'on ressentit le plus le fait d'être Romain, comme l'exprimèrent Ammien Marcellin vers 395 ou Orose vers 417. Ce dernier pouvait écrire « *ubique patria, ubique lex et religio mea est* » et « *inter Romanos (...) Romanus, inter Christianos Christianus, inter homines homo* ». ⁴⁴ Au cinquième siècle, Jérôme, Augustin, ou Hydace n'ont jamais eu l'impression qu'il existait deux états romains. Et Théodose II ne pensait pas différemment en donnant un empereur de sa famille à l'Occident en 423 en la personne de Valentinien III et en faisant promulguer son Code à Rome et à Constantinople en 438, réaffirmant ainsi l'unité dynastique et juridique d'un monde romain que l'on ne pouvait pas penser pluriel.

44 Orose, *Histoires*, V.2.1 et 2.8 ; éd. et trad. Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, *Orose, Histoires contre les païens* (Paris, 1991) ; « partout est ma patrie, partout ma loi et ma religion » ; « Romain parmi les Romains, chrétien parmi les chrétiens, humain parmi les humains ».

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Measuring the Power of the Roman Empire

David Potter

By the age of Cicero – the point at which they began to recognize the fact that they controlled a territorial empire and could raise revenue from it – the Romans were accustomed to measure their power with criteria taken over wholesale from Greek theory. In the *De Legibus*, Cicero says simply that senators ought to know the state of the army, the treasury, the allies, friends and tributaries of Rome and the nature of the attachment of each to Rome. For Cicero this is what it was to “know the State.”¹ In these terms power is a function of income and manpower. Such a measurement, which, as we shall see, would have a long history going forward, was even then being amply employed by Gaius Caesar in his *Gallic Wars*, and had a long prior history in Greek thought. Caesar famously illustrated the power of the various Gallic and German tribes he subdued or encountered by telling his readers how many of them there were or had been. Good of the Helvetians to have produced a census document (in Greek no less) attesting to the fact that there were 368,000 of them at the beginning of their migration. There were now a mere 110,000 going home. The Suebi, the most powerful of the Germans were said (a nice concession on Caesar’s part) to have controlled one hundred districts which each furnished 1000 men to fight each year – since the same warriors only fought every other year, this meant that there were at least 200,000 of them, and there were nearly 250,000 Gauls who came to the relief of Vercingetorix (including men from tribes such as the Nervii that Caesar claimed to have annihilated in recent years).²

A conception of state power as a function of demography and money would have been familiar to any Roman aristocrat who knew (as any Roman aristocrat would have) the works of fifth-century Greek historians. This Roman might also have noted that the handling of these ideas in both Herodotus and Thucydides was considerably less simplistic than the numbers game Caesar played might imply. It was Herodotus who famously created the largest army on earth so that it could invade Greece in 480 BC, and praised the Athenians for

1 Cic. *Leg.* 3.41 with A. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Legibus* (Ann Arbor, 2004), p. 540; C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1991), pp. 124 and 181–83.

2 Caes. *BG* 1.29; 4.1.3–7; 7.75 (the Nervii contribute 5,000 men).

their wise use of the silver from Laurion to build a fleet.³ At the same time, he questioned the value of calculations based purely on math, usually with the aid of Demaratus, pointing out that Greeks were tough because they were poor, and that although Xerxes had lots of *anthropoi* in his army he was rather short on *andres*. Courage, some wisdom and the aid of the Gods could overcome vast differentials in power.⁴ The Herodotean calculus of Persian power was well reflected in the Thucydidean calculation of Athenian power, in his own terms, and inserted into the thoughts of Pericles and Archidamus.⁵ But Thucydides too makes it ever so clear that the sinews of power do not make for real power if there are not exercised appropriately. Political imbecility can undermine the greatest states, moral failings are not unconnected with failures on the battlefield, and everyone needed to be aware that luck was always going to play a role in the way things worked out. The stress on money as a measure of power – something that Aristophanes was mimicking at the same time that Herodotus and Thucydides were writing – was plainly not a development of the 420s BC. The most powerful physical statement of the position was on view on the acropolis in the form of the Athenian Tribute lists, and eminently visible to any visitor to Persepolis, where the Apadana reliefs offered a vision of the Persian Empire's vast extent.⁶ In book 1 of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle lists the five subjects of deliberative oratory as: ways and means, war and peace, national defense, imports and exports, and legislation. Under ways and means the categories that must be mastered are the state's sources of revenue, and all its expenditure with a view to identifying any part that is superfluous, or too large. Under peace and war, the categories are the extent of a state's actual and potential military strength of his country – both of his own state and of a potential rival – and whether the military power of another country is like or unlike that of his own. He should also know the history of wars his country has fought. Under the category of defense (distinct from war and peace since that category seems to be geared to wars aggressive war) are defensive force and the positions of the forts. Food supply encompasses the outlay to meet the needs of his country; the kinds of food produced domestically and imported as well

3 Hdt. 7.186 (size of Xerxes' army), 144 (Laurion).

4 Hdt. 7.211.

5 Thuc. 1.80–85; 140–144 with L. Kallet, *Money, Expense, and Naval Power in Thucydides' History* 1–5.24 (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 80–89 and 93–96.

6 D.S. Potter, "A Note on Ath. Pol. 24.3," *The American Journal of Philology* 108 (1987), 164–66; on the problem of overstated Athenian revenues see also Kallet, *Money, Expense and Naval Power*, pp. 48–51; for the ideological aspects of Persian palace decoration see P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* trans. P.T. Daniels (Winona Lake, 2002), pp. 171–83.

as articles that are part of the import and export markets. Under law he needs to know his own country's history and the histories of other states.⁷

The power of Persia may have been readily on view on the Apadana reliefs, but it also raised questions about the strict applicability of a calculus based on men and money. The march of the 10,000 was taken in the early fourth century BC as revealing the actual weakness of the Persian kingdom (coincidentally just as Persian power was at its most effective in Greek politics with Persian gold shaping the terms of Common Peaces). Power could be undermined by cultural factors ranging from sexual deviance to the effect of barbaric government. Still, the historians of Alexander the Great would stress the disparity between his armies and those that he defeated in the course of the invasion of Persia. There can be little doubt either that massive Persian armies figured in Callisthenes' accounts to impress his readers or that Alexander knew full well that there were limitations on the numbers of men who could be supplied in the field. The campaign against Persia was based, in part, on recognition that there was a massive practical difference between theoretical power as measured by lists of resources and actual power on the battlefield.⁸ Armies larger than 40,000–50,000 men were impossible to sustain over long distances given the nature of pre-modern logistics. Alexander's tactics were based on the fact that his army was not significantly smaller than the army that Darius III was deploying.

Greeks, and the Persians, whom I suspect to have been their models in this, seem not to have been alone in making use of the rhetoric of military mathematic to express the concept of state power. The inscription left by Hannibal in Calabria at the end of his time in Italy suggests that Carthaginians might have expressed things in a similar way, and Polybius' observation on Italian manpower makes it plain that, in addition to the organization, both civil and military, that he described in book six, he regarded the ability to draw upon vast resources of manpower as an essential component of Roman power. The use of counting to express the vastness of victories is related to this – something well exemplified by Pompeian documents in the late sixties as well as Caesar's notorious calculation of the mayhem he achieved in Gaul. In both cases it should be noted that if someone tried to make policy on the bases of the claims that were being made, they might well be in some trouble since the numbers appear to have been quite fanciful. It was the thought that counted, but the

7 Ar. *Rhet.* 1359b-1360a.

8 Arr. *Anab.* 2.8.8; 3.11.3–6; for Callisthenes as the source for the "official tradition" at this point in Alexander's career see A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* (Oxford, 1980), p. 31.

thought also suggested that numbers did not determine outcomes. Caesar and Pompey were subduing (or killing) people far in excess to the men in their own armies, actual military power depended upon factors such as training and the general's capacity, that corrected numerical imbalances (if it did the Romans would surely have lost).⁹

To sum up so far, by the time of Augustus there was a long tradition of measuring state power in terms of revenue and manpower, and an equally long tradition of questioning the relevance of such calculations in determining a state's actual power – that is implicit in the way that Aristotle includes economic and political factors in his list of things people have to know to be statesmen. There were always moral factors to be considered. Still, in the early empire, the measurement of state power through accounting of revenues and manpower appears to have been enshrined through the summary of state resources that Augustus prepared at the time of his death for delivery to the public at the time of his funeral. Tacitus subscribes both to the view that Roman power should be measured in terms of revenues and men – as he suggests in his description of the empire at the beginning of book four of the *Annales*, and raises questions about the long-term validity of such calculations most clearly in the *Germania* where he suggests that it is the disunity of Rome's enemies that is a blessing for the empire as its destiny presses onwards (he certainly does not think that the Germans are more numerous or wealthier).¹⁰ Given that the doctrine of the succession of kingdoms could not certainly be said to end – the one thing that one knew about other empires is that they had vanished – Romans could not be sure that the same fate would not be theirs.¹¹

9 Pol. 3.33.18 (Hannibal's inscription), 2.24 (total Roman forces in 225 BC), in my view the Roman numbers are rhetorical, for the problem of their relationship with the real world see E. Lo Cascio, "Recruitment and the Size of the Roman Population from the Third to First Century BCE," in *Debating Roman Demography*, ed. W. Scheidel (Leiden, 2001), pp. 127–33 and further discussion in n. 15 below; for Caesar's claims see Plin. *NH* 7.91–92 compare Plin. *NH* 7.97–98, and Plut. *Pomp.* 45.3 for Pompey's records; for Roman consciousness of a change of attitude towards empire in these years see L. Beness and T. Hillard, "*Rei militaris virtus...orbem terrarum parere huic imperio coegit*: The Transformation of Roman Imperium," in *A Companion to Roman Imperialism*, ed. D. Hoyos (Leiden, 2013), pp. 149–51.

10 Tac. *Ann.* 4.4.2–5.4; *Germ.* 33.2; for the meaning of this phrase see J. Rives, *Tacitus: Germania* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 258–60, though he does admit some negative association.

11 For the succession of empires J.W. Swain "The Theory of the Four Monarchies," *Classical Philology* 35 (1940), 1–21 remains important; for further bibliography and discussion of other schemes see D.S. Potter, *Prophets and Emperors: Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), pp. 98–110 and 183–92.

Similarly, while the Romans might measure their own power with reference to Persia using the objective criteria they used for themselves, they could not do so when dealing with the northern tribes, which did not have recognizable revenue streams. Tacitus himself recognized that cultural differences played an important role in limiting the possibility for Roman expansion no matter what the imbalance in power might be. He remarks that Phraates, placed on the Parthian throne in 35 dropped dead because he was *patriis moribus impar* having spent too many years indulging in Roman luxury, and that Polemo was the preferred candidate of the Armenians to be their king because he had accustomed himself to their habits. He later notes that the Armenians were culturally inclined to favor the Parthians. Is it accidental that these passages occur in a work most likely completed after 117 AD – were they take-aways from Trajan's decision to abandon the provinces briefly established in Iraq? Possibly so, but Tacitus had written long before of the importance of "attractive" or "soft" power in securing Roman rule. He praised his father-in-law Agricola and his efforts to acclimatize the Britons to Roman ways as a key to pacifying the province in a work completed in the first part of Trajan's reign.¹²

Tacitus' attitude towards conquest reflects an internal criticism of the way that the Roman state evaluated its own power. Tacitus seems to have favoured generally expansionist behaviour – something perhaps not unconnected with his father-in-law's career in Britain – and tends to see the avoidance of expansion as a sign of imperial weakness.¹³ Appian and Cassius Dio looked at things differently. Appian noted that Antoninus Pius would not agree to impose direct rule over peoples who offered themselves to Rome if they could not pay the costs of their own governance by Rome. Dio complained that Severus' annexation of Mesopotamia was both expensive and a source of needless conflict with Persia.¹⁴ The fact was that the Roman Empire had reached what might be called natural limits in that the equation of treasure and soldiers proved extremely inelastic over time. Although the Augustan military system was long a work in progress, a rough equilibrium of men under arms as a percentage of

12 Tac. *Ann.* 6.32.2 (Phraates); *Ann.* 2.56.2 (Polemo); *Ann.* 13.34.2 (Armenians). For the issue of the date see D.S. Potter, "The Inscriptions on the Bronze Hercules from Mesene: Vollogaes IV's War with Rome and the Date of Tacitus' *Annales*," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 88 (1991), 277–90; V.E. Pagán, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Tacitus*, ed. V.E. Pagán (Oxford, 2012), p. 3. For Agricola see Tac. *Agr.* 21.2; for the concept of "soft power" see esp. J.S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York, 2004) pp. 5–18.

13 For Tacitus' views see D.S. Potter, "The Limits of Empire," in *A Companion to Roman Imperialism*, ed. Hoyos, pp. 325–27.

14 App. *Praef.* 7.26; Dio 65.3.3.

the adult male population appears to have been reached by the time of his death. The best estimate of the population of the Roman Empire in AD 14 is that there were 45,500,000 million inhabitants. At that point in time there were twenty-five legions with a theoretical strength of 5,600 men, for a total of 140,000 legionaries; the recently constituted imperial guard, stationed in Italy, numbered 10,000 men, and it is probable that there were around 170,000 soldiers serving with the *auxilia* (assuming that the ratio of 1.12:1 for auxiliaries to legionaries attested for the second century was inherited from the first century). Assuming that there were roughly 20,000 men serving with the fleets at Ravenna and Misenum, the total military establishment of the Augustan age amounted to around 340,000 men, or roughly 2.5% of the male population over the age of eighteen. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the best estimate is that there were around 61,000,000 inhabitants of the empire. At this point the number of legions had expanded to thirty for roughly 168,000 legionaries and roughly 200,000 auxiliaries with again, about 30,000 men serving in the guard and fleets (though, with the addition of fleets on the Rhine and Danube to those at Ravenna and Misenum, this number may be on the low side).

The military establishment under Marcus, just before the radical, if temporary, reduction in the population resulting from the great plague, exhibits a lower ratio of serving soldiers to civilians than had Augustan establishment (roughly 2% of the adult male population). The decline in the proportion of the male population under arms is unlikely to have changed the proportion of the budget attributed to the army significantly.¹⁵ Assuming that the imperial

15 Population of the empire: B.W. Frier, "Demography," in *The Cambridge Ancient History* 11, eds. A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey, and D. Rathbone (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), 812, 814; on the methods involved see W. Scheidel, "The Roman Population: The Logic of the Debate," in *People, Land and Politics: Demographic Developments and the Transformation of Roman Italy 300 BC-AD 14*, eds. L. de Ligt and S. Northwood (Leiden, 2008), pp. 17–71; esp. 55–62 on the significance of comparative data, on which the validity of Frier's estimate depends. Estimates of proportion of soldiers to civilians (too high in my view): J.B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army* (Oxford, 1984), p. 270; Michael Alexander Speidel, *Heer und Herrschaft im Römischen Reich der hohen Kaiserzeit*, *Mavors Roman Army Researches* 16 (Stuttgart, 2009), p. 475 (7.5% of the male population). Reasonable estimates of cost of army and proportion of the budget: MacMullen, "The Roman Emperor's Army Costs," *Latomus* 43 (1984), 571–80; R. Goldsmith, *Premodern Financial Systems* (Cambridge, Eng., 1987). R.P. Duncan-Jones, *Money and Government in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), pp. 33–46 overstates army size by 20% and salary costs by nearly 100% (see his tables 3.1 and 3.2), uses figures for AD 200 rather than, as here, for ca. 150, and seems to me to underestimate the revenues of Rome, which Goldsmith sets at 3% of GDP. Goldsmith avoids problematic attempts at precision, as e.g. W. Scheidel and S.J. Friesen, "The size of the economy and the distribution of income in the Roman Empire," *Journal of Roman*

budget had expanded at the same rate as population – its main driver since the bulk of taxes were derived from cultivatable land and population – the cost to the treasury would have been proportionally higher than it was in AD 14 both because of the 33% percent salary increase that Domitian granted in AD 84 and because, in the course of the second century, the food and equipment for which first-century legionaries would have paid out of their salaries came to be included within their pay packages. It is perhaps a sign of the army's role in domestic politics that emperors chose to increase the compensation of their soldiers rather than their numbers. Such a decision also bespeaks a fundamental decision to limit the manpower needs of the empire; an estimate of the overall cost of army salaries under Augustus, using these figures, would put then at roughly 58% of the total budget; and 71% when retirement bonuses are figured into the mix. This is comparable to actual proportions in the itemized budget that survives from Egypt for 1595/6 where wages amount to roughly 50% of the revenues with a substantial surplus amounting to roughly 20% of revenue, which is delivered as tribute to Istanbul and the holy cities. In Elizabethan England, where again we have real numbers, military expenditures ranged from 73 to 80% of the budget, while they average just under 50% in early fifteenth century Florence (though the average is deceptive since they were much higher in wartime). Such comparative data acts as a check on speculation – if a model for Roman expenditure fell outside the parameters established by measurable budgets of other pre-modern states then the model would, in my opinion, have to go.¹⁶

Studies 99 (2009), pp. 61–91, 91 (though with results not dissimilar to Goldsmith's); he would seem to me to be supported by the empirical observation that the state could pay the increased cost of Severus' expansion and salary increase, but not Caracalla's further pay-increase: Hdn. 3.8.4; *HA Sev.* 12.2, Dio 77.9.3–4 (Severus); 78.36 (Caracalla); Dio 78.12, 78.36 on the return to pay rates under Severus which appear to have been regarded as acceptable and not requiring additional imposts on the upper classes (a sore point with Dio). In terms of the proportion of the population under arms, the estimates given, based on the "low count" should be contrasted with the proportion of the Italian population under arms during various crises of the middle and late Republic, ranging as high as 8%, a point that has been used to favor the "high count" (see E. Lo Cascio, "Recruitment," pp. 127–138 but see Scheidel "The Roman Population," pp. 39–41).

- 16 For Egypt see M. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300–1450* (Cambridge, Eng. 1985), pp. 613–15; Goldsmith, *Premodern Financial Systems*, p. 91; for Elizabethan England see Goldsmith, *Premodern Financial Systems*, p. 194; for Florence see Goldsmith, *Premodern Financial Systems*, pp. 164–67; see also P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, 1987), p. 63 on Cromwellian expenditure.

In terms of the army's mission, Dio and Tacitus stress both defence against outside threats and deterrence of domestic unrest. In Dio's view a standing army must be stationed on the frontiers to keep enemies away, and to make sure that Rome would always have adequately trained men available in case of need. He stated that it was a good way to make use of the talents of men who might otherwise turn to brigandage. Josephus, who had reason to know, has Herod Agrippa stress the fact that no subject people could hope to resist the power of the Roman army.¹⁷ The army was a tool of both domestic and foreign policy and it appears that an imperial decision to use it on a large scale stemmed from a breakdown in normal relations.

The combination of Severus' increase in the size of the army, raising three new legions in the 190s, bringing the total number of men under arms 436,000, his increase in the compensation of the average legionary and the temporary down turn in the economy stemming from the catastrophe of the Antonine plague served to upset the balance of payments upon which the imperial system had been based from the previous two centuries. While we do not have this argument made explicitly, it does appear that there was sufficient redundancy built into the system that a shift in resources may have been sufficient to maintain the essential balance between income and expenditure in Severus' lifetime, but the subsequent increase in army pay initiated by Caracalla was problematic. That much is clear from Macrinus' effort after Caracalla's assassination to eliminate the pay increase for new recruits. His action embittered the army and contributed mightily to the success of the insurrection that placed Elagabalus on the throne. Macrinus restored the Caracallan rate of 600 denarii a year when Elagabalus' revolt began and salaries may have increased even further under Maximinus (though this is not certain).¹⁸ Signs of shifting priorities, long since recognized by Stephen Mitchell in an important study of building inscriptions from Asia Minor, show that emperors ceased spending money on public works projects in the course of the third century, and, notoriously, exploited the customary ratio of 25:1 for silver *denarii* to an *aureus* by lowering the silver content of the *denarius* and scams such as the Caracallan introduction of the *antoninianus* – a double value denarius that had less than double the silver content.¹⁹ The story of the imperial silver coinage, thanks to the splendid work of David Walker is well known and need not be rehashed here.

¹⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 4.5.1; Dio 52.27.3–4; Jos. *BJ* 2.345–404.

¹⁸ Dio 78.28.1–2; for his restoration of Caracallan pay rates see Dio 78.34.3.

¹⁹ S. Mitchell, "Imperial Building in the Eastern Roman Provinces," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 91 (1987), 333–365; D. Rathbone, "Monetisation, Not Price-Inflation, in Third-Century AD Egypt," in *Coin Finds and Coin Use in the Roman World: The Thirteenth*

For our purposes, however, what is significant is that the decline in the silver content of the coinage reflects central fiscal policy – and a long-term understanding that the budget could be kept in balance through such actions (and that the budget needed to be balanced). It appears from a tantalizing fragment of a work on coinage, written by the jurist Lucius Volusius Maecianus that the Roman state understood that the value of money was based on an act of trust equating the value of a coin with an object of merchandise that people wanted to buy.²⁰

In his justly famous account of *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy introduced the notion of imperial overreach as the states of early modern Europe expanded their reach beyond the means to support the tasks they had taken upon themselves. In his view “wealth and power, or economic strength and military strength are always relative and should be seen as such,” and that “the differentiated pace of economic growth among the Great Powers ensures that they will go on, rising and falling, relative to each other.”²¹ The model was and is a powerful one as it had obvious applicability to the events of the later twentieth century – including one that occurred just after Kennedy wrote, that is the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union – and could be seen as exemplifying the principle that a state could remain immensely powerful (and in possession of the capacity to destroy the planet) but fail relative to other powers.²² Kennedy was able to use the data of comparative Gross Domestic product to illustrate the nature of overreach.²³

Neither Kennedy’s data nor his problems are directly relevant to the study of the Roman Empire, but the concept of relative decline is. While we can pro-

Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History, 25.27.3.1993, eds. C.E. King and D.G. Wigg (Berlin, 1996), pp. 329–33 on the tariff of gold to silver.

20 For the history of Roman silver coinage see D. Walker, *The Metrology of the Roman Silver Coinage*, BAR International Series 5, 22 and 40 (Oxford, 1976–1978). For the text of Maecianus’ *Distributio* see F. Hulstsch ed., *Metrologicorum scriptorium reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1866) with discussion in S. Cuomo, “Measures for An Emperor: Volusius Maecianus’ Monetary Pamphlet for Marcus Aurelius,” in *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, eds. J. König and T. Whitmarsh (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), pp. 206–228.

21 Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 536 and 537.

22 See the important review discussion (also prior to the fall of the Soviet Union) by A. Giddens, M. Mann and I. Wallerstein, “Comments on Paul Kennedy’s *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*,” *British Journal of Sociology* 40 (1989), 328–40 (the issue appeared in June of that year) and W. Woodruff, “The Rise and fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000 by Paul Kennedy,” *The American Historical Review* 94 (1989), 719–21.

23 See esp. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 55–70, 170–77 and 198–249.

duce some sort of data for the size of the empire and its balance sheet, we cannot do the same for its neighbors, with the possible exception of Persia, and, since the empire remained within steady boundaries, it is not possible to make a strong case about imperial overreach as a contributing factor to the decline of the Roman Empire. In fact it is possible to show in a number of cases that emperors avoided maximal expansion in the wake of significant victories.

The case of Marcus Aurelius' settlement with Persia after 165 is significant. Despite an overwhelming Roman victory, Marcus Aurelius made no effort to acquire significant new territory in the east, even though arguably, the kingdom of Edessa, which would be annexed by Severus, was in a position to be added to the empire with the obvious strategic benefit that accrued (despite what Dio had to say) of keeping the frontier further from the crucial area of central Syria (which had in fact been invaded by the Persians in 161). The only changes that seem to have been made were the replacement of Parthian garrisons (possibly emplaced during the attack on Syria) with Roman garrisons along the middle Euphrates.²⁴ We cannot attribute this decision to the plague, which had yet to break out. Just as significant, albeit, in our sources far more controversial, was Marcus Aurelius' policy along the Danubian frontier.

In the case of the northern frontier, the record of treaties, sixteen in all, made with various groups in the last years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius and the first years of Commodus, illustrates a preference for indirect control. The usual terms include three elements: a treaty of friendship, regulation of tribal autonomy, and a statement of the terms under which the tribe's future relationship with Rome will be carried out. Typical ingredients in the first part are a statement of the relationship, return of booty, prisoners and deserters to Rome, and the assessment of a contribution of troops to the Roman army; steps in the second part were the naming of a king by Rome, a ban on alliances with other peoples, the requirement that a Roman officer be present at meetings of the tribe, and supervision of dealings with other tribes. The definition of a tribe's future relationship with Rome can be broken down into three categories: bans on certain types of activity (settlement within a certain distance from the Danube, navigation, regulation of contacts between the tribes and the province for commerce etcetera), requirement for future contributions to Rome, and the concession that the Romans will not seek to garrison the tribe's territory. Although there is some variation in points of detail (especially concerning the extent of the land to be left empty north of the Danube), the pattern is consistent, and offers no evidence that Marcus seriously considered the

24 P. Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia: The Middle Euphrates and Palmyra under Roman Control* (London, 2008), pp. 23–6.

expansion of the empire. Several of these terms are attested as early as the Julio-Claudian period in Rome's dealings with Germanic peoples.²⁵

It was only after Marcus' death that controversy appears to have broken out over the manner in which the northern wars had ended. The *Historia Augusta* biography of Marcus asserts that "he waged war for the next three years [after his return from the east] against the Hermunduri, Sarmatians and Quadi, and, if he had lived for another year, he would have turned them into provinces," a statement that is based upon the work of Marius Maximus writing in the 220s. Similarly, and even later, Herodian places in Commodus' mouth the statement that soldiers should "set in order and strengthen our position, if you finish off the remnants of the war with all your valor, and extend the Roman Empire to the ocean." Herodian then attributes Commodus' departure for Rome to the influence of disreputable advisers, the *Historia Augusta* asserts, "he submitted to the terms of the enemy and gave up the war that his father had almost finished." Dio apparently said something similar.²⁶

Although we cannot now know Dio's source for his account of Marcus' northern wars, it seems likely that Dio drew his information from a person who composed a work specifically on those wars. The image of the vigorous conqueror might well have been a standard point of contrast for an emperor who sought peace – and have been anything but new in the late second or early third centuries, though a more generous evaluation might have drawn attention to the similarity of the new policy to the old policy of Antoninus Pius, about whom it was said that "no one had greater authority among foreign people," that he always "loved peace," and who "was venerable no less than terrible to foreign kings, so much so that many barbarian nations, putting aside arms, brought their quarrels and disputes to him, and obeyed his decrees."²⁷ In the

25 M. Stahl, "Zwischen Abgrenzung und Integration: Die Verträge der Kaiser Mark Aurel und Commodus mit den Völkern jenseits der Donau," *Chiron* 19 (1989), 289–317; P. Kovács, *Marcus Aurelius' Rain Miracle and the Marcomannic Wars* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 233–36; 246–48; 255–63 for the treaties; D.S. Potter "Empty Areas and Roman frontier Policy," *The American Journal of Philology* 113 (1992), 269–274 on earlier practice.

26 *HA Marc.* 27.10; *HA Comm.* 3.5; *Hdn.* 1.8.1–6; Dio 71.33.4; 72.1.3.

27 Statements about the quiescence of Pius *HA V. Ant.* 9.10; Eutrop. 8.2 might need to be rethought in light of the material noted in the next footnote for the processes resulting in the king given to the Quadi and Armenians [*RIC* 3 Antoninus n. 619–20 with W. Hüttl, *Antoninus Pius: historisch-politisch Darstellung* (Prague, 1936), p. 272; *HA V. Ant.* 9.6] may not have been entirely peaceful. For Marcus see now Kovács, *Marcus Aurelius*, 242–63; S. Dillon, "Women on the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius and the Visual Language of Roman Victory," in *Representations of War in Ancient Rome*, eds. S. Dillon and K. Welch (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), pp. 244–71.

second century AD. Roman emperors were content with the notion that indirect power was real power and that their power extended into areas where they did not have to bear the cost of annexation. For Tacitus the *claustra imperii* could reach to the Persian Gulf because the king of Mesene counted as a client. Recent discoveries at Harzhorn also require some rethinking about what the exercise of indirect power might look like. Non-occupation does not mean non-intervention, and from the Julio-Claudian period to the mid third century there is evidence now for substantial military intervention well beyond Roman frontiers. In AD 49, for instance, Roman troops were sent into the Crimea, and from there, even to the lands east of the Sea of Azov. The Roman troops who engaged at Harzhorn, nearly two hundred miles north of the Rhine were returning from an expedition further to the north. Observation posts and intelligence collected, well away the formal frontiers could steer expeditionary forces for which we now have no record. It would be surprising if the battle of Harzhorn had no parallels in the centuries between Claudius and Maximinus or if Maximinus should prove to have been especially innovative in his policies.²⁸

The balance of power between Rome and its neighbors was not initially disturbed by the rise of new powers. John Drinkwater's important discussion of the evolution of German tribes in contact with the Roman state shows that there is no reason to think, for instance that the Franks and the Alemanni were any different from the Cherusci who had been there before (great powers have a tendency to force their rivals into new alliances).²⁹ They may have repackaged themselves but that is really all. The Sasanians were not initially a significantly greater threat than the Arsacids who they drove out, it was Roman mismanagement that made them so, and even then we need not be blinded by the rhetoric of the *Res Gestae* of Sapor and imagine the power of Persia to have been greater than it was.³⁰ Even though it does seem clear that Sapor himself

28 Tac. *Ann.* 12.15–21 for Didius in the Crimea and beyond; for Roman contact with Clochis and Iberia see D. Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity: A History of Clochis and Transcaucasian Iberia 550 BC–AD 562* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 219–37; for Harzhorn see H. Pöppelmann, K. Deppmeyer, W.-D. Steinmetz eds., *Roms vergessener Feldzug. Die Schlacht am Harzhorn* (Darmstadt, 2013); see also *AE* 2004 n.1643 for the Roman base at Farasan off the coast of Yemen.

29 On this point see Giddens, Mann and Wallerstein, “Comments,” pp. 334–35 (Mann in this instance).

30 For the Alamanni see J.F. Drinkwater, *The Alamanni and Rome 213–496 (Caracalla to Clovis)* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 43–79; for the rise of the Sasanians see now P. Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran* (London, 2008), pp. 37–53; despite the fact that Ardashir and Sapor planted relatives in many important posts, the power structure of the Parthia confederacy

was a preternaturally able soldier, it is also clear that, even after destroying effective Roman opposition, he never attempted to operate north of the Taurus or too far south of Antioch. He appears to have realized that his own power had limits and attacked when Roman power was deployed in fashions that might be seen as less than ideal. Sapor's victory over Gordian III, deep in Mesopotamia, followed upon a campaign where Sapor had been driven out of territory he occupied during a Roman civil war. Sapor's capture of Antioch in 252 followed a year in which the Roman army was weakened through the disaster at Abrittus, and the victory over Valerian in 260 was enabled by the ineptitude of a Roman emperor who was trying to do too much. The failures on the frontiers in the 250s as a whole cannot be disconnected from failures in the Roman command structure connected with the political instability that set in with the assassination of Alexander Severus.³¹ If it shows nothing else, the career of Diocletian shows that the Roman state retained the resources, when properly coordinated, to wage successful wars on more than one front. Notably Diocletian seems to have been conscious of the cost of success in that his treaty with the Persians did not involve the acquisition of new territory.³² Even though we lack a pile of memoranda from the emperor that might prove this point directly, the evidence of Diocletian's own actions show that he was conscious of cost and wished to keep expenditure where it was. In other words, "no new troops." John Lydus' statement that his army numbered 435,266 men suggests no increase since the time of Severus.³³

External imperial overreach and relative decline, stated as an inevitable consequence of inadequate economic resources, in Kennedy's terms, cannot be shown to be workable concepts for the analysis of the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries. But does this mean that the Roman state was as powerful in 350 as it was in 150? The answer is no. What was decisively lost in the wake of Constantius II's coup in 337 was central direction of resource allocation. Constantius II repeatedly complained that he did not have enough men to fight the Persians; it was only Julian who could bring western troops to the east who could think of invading Persia. Valens admitted the Goths to the

remained largely intact and reasserted itself after Sapor I's death (for Ardashir and Sapor see D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180–395* 2nd ed. (London, 2014), p. 218). For the limits of Sapor's ambitions see now M.R. Shayejin, *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* (Cambridge, Eng., 2011), pp. 5–38.

31 Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, pp. 230–32 and 242–53 with discussion of other scholarship.

32 For Diocletian's campaigns see D.S. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 55–57 with references to other scholarship.

33 John Lyd. *De Mens.* 1.27 and, more generally, Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, pp. 437–49.

empire because he wanted more soldiers without weakening his tax revenues.³⁴ These are signs that Roman emperors in the fourth century understood the importance of balancing their budgets, a concern that the Diocletianic indiction cycle also makes plain. But they are also signs that there were political constraints on their ability to do so.

The problems of the fourth-century empire present little evidence here to support the case made so eloquently by A.H.M. Jones and, in a somewhat different way, by Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, that the Roman Empire collapsed from over-taxation, excessive government exploitation, and the baleful influence of Christianity. The basic problem for Jones was that “too few producers supported too many idle mouths.” It did not help either that Christianity taught that a public career could be bad for the soul so that “the service of the state tended to be left to ambitious careerists, and Christianity thus paradoxically increased the corruption of the state.”³⁵

Jones’ analysis does resonate with Kennedy’s views of the causes of relative decline, but it cannot be shown that he was correct in his estimates of the increase in the size of the imperial government. This suggests that we might instead look at the question from a slightly different angle. The problem was not the sufficiency of the totality of the empire’s resources, but rather of resource allocation. Peter Brown has correctly noted that the Christian governments of the fourth and fifth centuries were more proactive in promoting an ideological agenda than those of earlier centuries. Brown’s point is a subtle transformation of Jones’ case, taking it for granted that there was more government, and finally that the increased professionalization of government in the sixth century destroyed local autonomy, leaving cities, now dominated by bishops and large landowners to collapse into turmoil.³⁶ He is also absolutely correct in seeing that the Christian Empire involved itself in the private affairs of its people in

34 Amm. Marc. 20.4.1–2 (Constantius and Julian) with Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, pp. 457–61 and E.L. Wheeler, “The Army and the Limes in the East,” in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, ed. P. Erdkamp (Oxford, 2007), pp. 255–56 on deployments; Amm. Marc. 31.4.4 (Valens) with N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 183 (suggesting that there was a specific need for fresh troops for a projected Persian war) and 299–319.

35 A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 1045–1064, the passages quoted are from pp. 1045 and 1063–4; see also G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London, 1981), pp. 453–503.

36 P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150–750* (London, 1971), pp. 145–7 and 156–7 (professionalization of government); see also S. Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284–641* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 155–190 on the growing role of imperial government, and esp. 186–87 on connection between Roman and Christian ideals.

ways that the Pagan Empire did not, and Fergus Millar has shown that the media opened up by Church Councils were important in creating a new Greek-Roman society in the eastern Mediterranean.³⁷ This may have been a more centralized society as the expressive diversity of the early empire was channelled through narrower passages. All of these are valid points, but a state's power was still theoretically a function of its revenue and manpower, and people at this same time would say that this was insufficient. Both Romans and Persians show signs of stress. The Persians routinely demand subsidies, which they appear to have needed to protect their northern frontiers from the peoples of the steppe, and the Romans found that it was advisable to pay off a power that was militarily superior; Attila the Hun's empire. As a strategy payment was reasonable – and cost effective – as a symbolic act it was deeply embarrassing, it weakened an empire's power of attraction by advertising military incapacity. That is why Roman ambassadors tried to claim that the money they gave Attila were actually his salary as *magister utriusque militiae* or fixed treaty terms with Persia so as to avoid annual payments that might appear to be tribute.³⁸

Insufficiency tended, in a long tradition of classical thought, to be defined in moral terms, and if we want to see how an ancient state measured its own power I suggest that we need to go beyond the simple equation of treasure + men = potential for destruction, to look at points where there may have been a concurrent fascination with widespread moral improvement.

The point that despite its power, there was at the very core of its being something wrong with the Roman state informs the rhetoric of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC; a few years later Polybius would adduce the notion that Roman power, whose expansion he had so admirably chronicled, was now morally challenged and Rome might be on the verge of losing its power.³⁹ Moral regeneration at home was concomitant with imperial expansion in the Augustan Age; afterwards emperors tended to give moral rectification something of a rest save at

37 F.G. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II 408–450* (Berkeley, 2006), pp. 192–234.

38 Priscus fr. 15, 2 (Blockley), Exc. 12 (Carolla) (Attila describes payments as tribute); fr. 11.2 (Blockley) Exc. 8. 145 (Carolla) (the offices “conceals” the tribute); Procop. *Bell.* 8.15.6 (outright payment to avoid the appearance of tribute); for the payments as a strategy see E. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009), pp. 49–56.

39 Plut. *Gracch.* 8.3; for Polybius see F.W. Walbank, “The Idea of Decline in Polybius,” in *Niedergang: Studien zu einem geschichtlichen Thema*, eds. S. Koselleck and P. Widmer (Stuttgart, 1980), pp. 41–58 = F. W Walbank, *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 193–211.

moments of grave scandal that is until the third century. Decius' edict on sacrifices, Valerian's persecution edict and sundry actions of the Tetrarchs – e.g. the edict forbidding brother-sister marriage, the response to the Manicheans, the tendentious prose of the Price-Edict's preface and the persecution edicts of 303 all fall within a pattern of Roman self-doubt. Constantius' micro-management of religious activity in the decades after Constantine died is perhaps what was to be expected of an emperor who was not powerful enough to ensure the security of his eastern border when he could not draw upon the resources of the western empire. The Zoroastrian extremism of the Sasanian regime strikes a similar cord as the revolutionary regime sought to justify its grasp on power.⁴⁰ The evidence Peter Brown adduces for the increased proactivity of the Late Roman government may be the best evidence for the government's perception of its own weakness.

Recent work on the quantification of the Roman Empire's economy has revealed, perhaps more clearly than we could have expected, the limitation of any effort at quantification.⁴¹ We can see signs of increased mechanization – e.g. the use of water wheels to grind grain – but we cannot know what actual impact this had on the economy of the empire as a whole, by what percentage did it increase economic output, we cannot measure efficiencies of scale or increase of output unrelated to changes in population. Confronted with evidence for archaeological economic expansion on the limestone massif south of Antioch we cannot know what impact this had on the overall power of the Roman Empire, and we have to wonder whether the plague put an end to this expansion in the middle of the sixth century. Indeed, the bubonic plague may have had a decisive impact on both Rome and Persia, for neither, it seems, could afford the military forces of earlier times. If we wish some estimate of the plague's overall impact, the answer may be provided by Tabari's account of the trial of Chosroes II after his deposition in 628, which, as James Howard-Johnston has convincingly show, reflects a late Sasanian history, *The Book of Lords*.⁴² The Roman victories at the root of the political chaos were the result

40 For the ostensible significance of Zoroastrianism in Sasanian ideology see now M.P. Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship Between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (Berkeley, 2009), pp. 102–4, though see also Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 321–95 esp. 324–34 and 347–50 showing that the actual situation was far more contested.

41 A.K. Bowman and A. Wilson, "Quantifying the Roman Economy: Integration, Growth, Decline?," in *Quantifying the Roman Economy: Methods and Problems*, eds. A.K. Bowman and A. Wilson (Oxford, 2009), pp. 3–84.

42 For the plague see esp. H. Kennedy, "The Justinianic Plague in Syria and the Archaeological Evidence," in *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541–750*, ed. L. Little (Cambridge, 2007) pp. 87–95; P. Sarris, "Bubonic Plague in Byzantium," *The Plague and the*

of extraordinary miscalculations on the Sasanian side, but they seem not to have been the only factor in the crisis of this year. At his trial the king (who, unsurprisingly, was executed in the aftermath) was accused of the murder of his predecessor (true), the ill-treatment of his sons, brutality, lack of affection towards his harem, treacherous behavior and:

[Fifth] What you have inflicted on your subjects generally in levying the land tax and in treating them with harshness and violence. [Sixth,] your amassing a great amount of wealth, which you exacted from the people with great brutality so that you drove them to consider your rule hateful and thereby brought them into affliction and deprivation. [Seventh] your stationing the troops for long periods along the frontiers with the Byzantines and on other frontiers, thereby separating them from their families (al-Tabari p. 1047 Nöldeke tr. Bosworth).

There is no obvious reason to believe that taxation was not in fact a serious issue, for Chosroes' successor promptly repealed some of the taxes that Chosroes had imposed, and while it is possible that the charge that Chosroes hoarded his wealth may have some validity – in his defense Chosroes does say that only a fool does not realize that a king maintains his authority through wealth and armies – the fact of these charges suggests that although having taken possession of Syria, Osrhoene and Egypt, Chosroes was unable to extract sufficient surplus from these lands to fund war and avoid alienating his subjects.⁴³ In Roman lands it is apparent that he retained the Roman tax system and many of the collectors who had been in post at the time of the conquest. A reasonable conclusion is that the surplus generated by these lands was insufficient to support the costs of aggressive warfare.

Greg Woolf has recently helped us see the change from the Republic to the Empire in terms of the history of empire, arguing (completely coherently) that what we saw in the Republic was a classic conquest state that passed through

End of Antiquity ed. L.K. Little (Cambridge, 2007) pp. 119–32; for Tabari see J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 367–68.

43 For Sasanian use of Roman institutions see C. Foss, "Syria in Transition: An Archaeological Approach," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 (1997), 189–269; for the revenue issues see D.S. Potter, "Cities in the Eastern Roman Empire from Constantine to Heraclius," in *Archaeology and the Cities of Asia Minor in Late Antiquity*, eds. O. Dally and C. Ratté (Ann Arbor, 2011), p. 259; for the overall circumstances see Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 149–60 who unpacks factional disputes within the Sasanian regime.

the fire and sword of its self-generated chaos to become a tributary empire.⁴⁴ The initial Roman version of a tributary empire was one in which individual people retained the right to choose how they would interact with their Roman overlords. So long as taxes were paid and violence abated, people retained considerable discretion in their personal lives (e.g. Egyptians siblings could marry each other). But the available surplus remained in a relatively stable state for centuries; ancient states were limited by technology in the extent to which they could systematize and enhance productivity, and this is something that it seems the emperors of Rome understood. Likewise they seem to have understood economies of scale, that the army at their disposal could strike with overwhelming force on any one frontier, but an army that could do more than that could not be afforded if emperors were to meet other priorities such as rewarding subjects who behaved well, or feeding the people of Rome. The permanent division of the empire after Constantine's death was an act of political rather than economic policy, but the effect was to eliminate certain efficiencies and economies in the disposition of force that had been commonplace in earlier eras. The western empire could not withstand barbarian invasions on two fronts by the beginning of the fifth century, and the eastern empire could do no better with its Persian rivals than hope for a draw (Attila was another matter). The Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon are phenomena of a weakened state. In the sixth century, the bubonic plague played havoc with earlier systems of finance based on the notion of a stable population, but that was not, in and of itself, enough to be a decisive factor in the end of either the Roman or Persian Empire. Both of the great powers suffered from the plague; the fact that Persia fought a war that the diminished resources of both sides could not support was a political decision. Internal politics lie at the heart of the problem.

What is striking about the Roman experience is that there is evidence to show both that the Romans understood the physical limitations on imperial power. But they could not, over time, avoid what Tacitus could also have described as the driving force of empire – the tendency for internal politics to develop an internal logic that undermined the functionality of the enterprise. The division of the empire after Constantine's death was the result of dynastic policy. We do not know what Constantine hoped would happen, but he had long ruled on the basis of large regional prefectures that were coming to take on lives of their own. He may not have intended for the empire to be divided into three antagonistic parts (in fact it is obvious that he did not – he was looking to have it divided into four parts with a weakened or ruined Persia across the border). His vision appears to have been to recreate the collaborative

44 G. Woolf, *Rome: An Empire's Story* (Oxford, 2012), 184–199.

administration of the tetrarchy in which he had grown up. Richard Burgess has tracked the stages in which that vision collapsed during the months after Constantine's death in May 337, and all I have to add to that analysis is the simple observation that Constantius II, the prime beneficiary from what happened, is unlikely to have been the prime mover of the coup that split the empire into three parts; he was twenty at the time and responsibility more likely lies with members of the court who were tired of waiting for the veterans of Constantine's years to give way and had their own vision of the future, in which Constantine's sons were given an opportunity to share.⁴⁵ If as I suspect he did, Constantine envisioned a return to the tetrarchic style of Diocletian, his officials preferred that of the age of Galerius, which concentrated power in regional offices, which I strongly doubt Constantine was interested in authorizing. Difficult he may have been to live with, but there is no reason to believe that he wished a fratricidal civil war to break out in the years after his death.

The division of the empire in 337, which was never really reversed, was not the result of rational policy considerations, of a decision that the state would run better if the efficiencies in the distribution of resources enabled by imperial unity was restricted. The empire's division was a function of domestic politics, driven by the perceived self-interest of long-serving officials who had no interest in answering to a distant authority. That is no more a feature of ancient empires than of modern super powers.

Overall, the consistency in the way ancient authors measured the strength of their states resonates with contemporary thinking not simply in tone, but also in impact. Knowing what was possible or wise did not guarantee that a course, either wise or well-informed would necessarily be followed. It is not always obvious that short-term advantage is just that, or that the solution to an immediate need would not clash with long-term goals. Xerxes would have derived minimal benefit from the conquest of Greece, just as it is not self-evident that Valens' best choice was to fight the war with Persia for which he hoped to

45 R. Burgess, "Summer of Blood: The Great Massacre of 337 and the Promotion of the Sons of Constantine," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62 (2008), 5–51; Potter, *Constantine the Emperor*, 292–3; Lenski, *Failure*, 308–9 on the military consequences. Connected with this is the issue of efficiency in the deployment of available resources; J. Howard-Johnston, "The Two Great Powers in Late Antiquity: A Comparison," in *The Byzantine and Islamic Near East*, eds. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton, N.J., 1992), pp. 57–226 suggests that the Sasanian state was likely more efficient in the extraction of resources from its people and mustered forces that were on a par with Roman armies though Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 33–160 (esp. 84–5) shows that generalization is unwise given the instability of the Sasanian regime. See also Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, pp. 166–67 on actual army sizes in the sixth century.

use the Goths whom he allowed across the Danube. That is why the rise and fall of Great Powers cannot be reduced to a simple equation.

Perhaps the most important perspective that can be gained from *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* is on the extraordinary stability achieved by Rome as opposed to other great powers. While we see “Great Power” effects such as the stimulation of new forms of political organization and the development of socio-economic elites around the political/military center, we may also come to question the concept of the “great power” in modern terms. Kennedy’s Great Powers emerged in conflict with each other, but no power, not even England in the nineteenth century or the United States in the second half of the twentieth century, achieved the relative dominance over its neighbours that the Roman Empire achieved. The most significant changes within the Roman Empire in the first century BC (the emergence of the monarchy) or the third and fourth centuries AD (the move from a monarchy to collegial government, shift in the capital and change in religion) arose from internal causes. Rome’s stability arguably arose from precisely the modes of thought discussed in this paper; the tendency to weigh power in quantifiable terms had the effect of limiting rather than encouraging expansion in the imperial period. Perhaps was the most important lesson of the late Republic was the destabilizing effect of aggression. It was another great historian – Cornelius Tacitus – who observed that the monarchy was inherently hostile to expansionism.⁴⁶ He felt this was opposed to the traditions of Rome’s Republican past. In that he was right.

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46 Tac. *Ann.* 4.32–33 and, on the restructuring of the memory of the Republic A.M. Gowing, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (Cambridge, Eng., 2005); see also J.S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York, 2011), p. xv.

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Mapping the New Empire: A Geographical Look at the Fourth Century¹

Giusto Traina

Despite the scant evidence for the creation of both a practical and a mental map of the imperial world, geography seems to have been a matter of some concern in Late Roman civilization: the ‘democratization of culture’ and the progress of information systems seems to have produced a deeper sensitivity for geography.² Geographical texts and maps were a part of education, as is demonstrated by Eumenius’ famous speech in support of the restoration of the school of the *Maenianae* in Autun (297/298).³ Closing his speech, Eumenius evokes the representations of “separate regions”:

- 1 This paper is a sort of prequel of Giusto Traina, “Mapping the World under Theodosius II,” in *Theodosius II. Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity*, ed. Christopher Kelly (Cambridge, Eng., 2013), pp. 115–171. In some points, I reconsider what I have already expressed, but in a less systematic form, in Giusto Traina, “Geografia dell’impero,” in *Enciclopedia costantiniana. Sulla figura e l’immagine dell’imperatore del cosiddetto Editto di Milano. 313–2013*, eds. Alberto Melloni, Mara Dissegna and Davide Dainese, 1 (Rome, 2013), pp. 583–598. Lavish thanks to Francesca Gazzano, Mark Humphries and Hervé Inglebert for their suggestions.
- 2 See Jean-Michel Carrié, “Antiquité tardive et ‘démocratisation de la culture’. Un paradigme à géométrie variable,” *Antiquité tardive* 9 (2001), 27–46; Averil Cameron, “Democratization Revisited: Culture and Late Antique and Early Byzantine Elites,” in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East. Elites Old and New*, eds. John Haldon, Lawrence I. Conrad, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 1.vi (Princeton, 2004), pp. 91–108. I suggest a “democratization of landscape” in Giusto Traina, “Paesaggio e ‘decadenza’. La palude nella trasformazione del mondo antico,” in *Società romana e impero tardoantico, 3: le merci gli insediamenti*, ed. Andrea Giardina (Rome-Bari, 1986), pp. 711–730; 905–917; Id., “Luoghi della transizione. Appunti sul paesaggio antico,” *Compar(a)ison* 2 (1998), 79–91. For a general survey see Mark Humphries, “A New Created World: classical geographical texts and Christian contexts in late antiquity,” in *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: inheritance, authority, and change*, ed. J.H. David Scourfield (Swansea, 2007), pp. 33–67.
- 3 See Eumenius, *Paneg. Lat.* 9 (5) 20.2–3. Giuseppe La Bua, “Patronage and education in third-century Gaul: Eumenius’ Panegyric for the Restoration of the Schools,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 3 (2010), 300–315; Antony Hostein, *La cité et l’Empereur. Les Éduens dans l’Empire romain d’après les Panégyriques latins* (Paris, 2012), pp.177–250; Traina, “Mapping the World,” pp. 155–158.

Here let the most noblest accomplishments of the bravest Emperors be recalled through representations of the separate regions (*per diuersa regionum argumenta*), while the twin rivers of Persia and the thirsty fields of Libya and the recurved horns of the Rhine and the many-cleft mouth of the Nile are seen again as eager messengers constantly arrive. Meanwhile the minds of the people gazing upon each of these places will imagine Egypt, its madness given over, peacefully subject to your clemency, Diocletian Augustus, or you, invincible Maximian, hurling lightning upon the smitten hordes of the Moors, or beneath your light hand, lord Constantius, Batavia and Britannia raising up their muddled heads from woods and waves (*squalidum caput siluis et fluctibus exserentem*), or you, Maximian Caesar, trampling upon Persian bows and quivers. For now, at last it is a delight to see a picture of the world, since we see nothing in it which is not ours.⁴

The personifications of Britannia and Batavia, theaters of Constantius Chlorus' campaigns, recall the topos of the barbarians living in marginal lands like woodlands and marshlands.⁵ This image, recalling the "anxiety" of late antique society, is not unusual in the literature of the period. For example, the anonymous panegyrist of 307 praises Maximianus for having "overwhelmed, forced to capitulate and resettled the fiercest tribes of Mauretania (the rebels known as *Quinquegentani*), who had trusted to their inaccessible mountaintops and natural fortifications", when at the same time "young" Constantine traverses the *limites* tirelessly, where the Roman Empire presses upon barbarian peoples.⁶

4 Eumenius, *Paneg. Lat.* 9 (5) 21.1–3, trans. C.E.V. (Ted) Nixon and Barbara S. Rodgers (Berkeley, 1994): "ibi fortissimorum imperatorum pulcherrimae res gestae per diuersa regionum argumenta recolantur, dum calentibus semperque venientibus victoriarum nuntiis, reuisuntur gemina Persidos flumina et Libyae arua sitientia, et convexa Rheni cornua et Nili ora multifida, dumque sibi ad haec singula intuentium animus adfingit, aut sub tua, Diocletiane Auguste, dementia, Aegyptum, furore posito, quiescentem, aut te Maximiane invicte, perculsa Maurorum agmina fulminantem aut sub dextera tua, domine Constanti, Bataviam Britanniamque squalidum caput silvis et fluctibus exerentem aut te, Maximianae Caesar, Persicos arcus pharetrasque calcantem. nunc enim, nunc demum, iuvat orbem spectare depictum, cum in illo nihil videmus alienum".

5 For other examples (especially Anon. *De rebus bellicis*) see Traina, "Paesaggio e 'decadenza'".

6 *Paneg. Lat.* 6 (7).8.6; 6 (7) 14.1. On the literary and visual language of Tetrarchic propaganda see Dietrich Boschung and Werner Eck eds. *Die Tetrarchie. Ein neues Regierungssystem und seine mediale Präsentation*, ZAKMIRA-Schriften 3 (Wiesbaden, 2006). See also

Similarly, eighteen years before, another panegyrist had described the obligations of the “métier d’Empereur”:

To admit into your heart the care of such a great state, and to take upon your shoulders the destiny of the whole world; to forget yourself, to speak, and live for the people; to stand on such a lofty summit of human affairs as to gaze down, as it were, on every land and sea, and to survey in turn with eyes and mind where calm weather is assured, where storms threaten, to observe which governors emulate your justice, which commanders maintain the glory of your courage, to receive countless messengers for every quarter, to send out just as many dispatches, to worry about so many cities and nations and provinces, to spend all one’s nights and days in perpetual concern for the safety of all.⁷

This language is typical of Tetrarchic ideology. Although the *Augusti* and the *Caesares* run different operational zones, they are at pains to highlight the imperial unity: therefore, the panegyrist of 291 coined the famous formula of *patrimonium indivisum* which characterizes the Empire of Diocletian and Maximian (“what full or twin brothers share an undivided inheritance so fairly as you share the Roman world?”).⁸ From 305 on, the titulatures of the Tetrarchs insistently recall the universal empire as the *orbis*: beside usual epithets as *pacator* or *restitutor orbis*, we also find expressions like *orbis terrarum dominus*, given to Constantius Chlorus, or even a typical Trajanic formula as *propagator orbis terrarum* (for Maximinus Daia). And of course, the complex evolution of Constantine’s titulature, with a vast range of expressions, and a tacit identification of the *imperium Romanum* with the *orbis terrarum*.⁹

Natalia Lozofsky, “Maps and panegyrics: Roman geo-ethnographical rhetoric in Late antiquity and the Middle ages,” in *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Fresh Perspectives, New Methods*, eds. Richard J.A. Talbert and Richard W. Unger (Leiden-Boston, 2008), pp. 169–88.

7 *Paneg. Lat.* 10 (2) 13.4: “...admittere in animum tantae rei publicae curam et totius orbis fata suscipere et oblitum quodammodo sui gentibus uiuere et in tam arduo humanarum rerum stare fastigio; ex quo ueluti terras omnes et maria despicias uicissimque oculis ac mente collustres ubi sit certa serenitas; ubi dubia tempestas; qui iustitiam uestram iudices aemulentur, qui uirtutis uestrae gloriam duces seruent, accipere innumerabiles undique nuntios; totidem mandata dimittere, de tot arribus et nationibus et prouinciis cogitare, noctes omnes diesque perpeti sollicitudine pro omnium salute transigere”.

8 *Paneg. Lat.* 11 (3) 6.3.

9 See Attilio Mastino, “*Orbis, κόσμος, οἰκουμένη*: aspetti spaziali dell’idea di impero universale da Augusto a Teodosio,” in *Popoli e spazio romano tra diritto e profezia*, Da Roma alla

Similarly to the Sassanian emperors, who boast that they are the kings of *Ērān* and *Anērān*, Constantine claims the role of *rector* of all the nations of the world.¹⁰ An interesting example is described by Eusebius, who remembers the

... constant diplomatic visitors who brought valuable gifts from their homelands, so that when we ourselves happened to be present we saw before the outer palace gates waiting in a line remarkable figures of barbarians, with their exotic dress, their distinctive appearance, the quite singular cut of hair and beard. The appearance of their hairy faces was foreign and astonishing, their bodily height exceptional. The faces of some were red, of others whiter than snow, of others blacker than ebony or pitch, and others had a mixed colour in between; for men of Blemmyan race, and Indian and Ethiopian, “who are twain-parted last of men” [Hom. *Od.* 1.23], could be seen of, recounting those mentioned.¹¹

In order to control the *oikoumene*, the *Augustus* and his vicars needed not only a survey of the imperial territories, but also of the *Barbaricum*. After his victories on the Rhine, Constantine struck some coins with the traditional iconography of a defeated kingdom, and with denominations like *Alamannia*, *Francia* or *Sarmatia*.¹² therefore, imperial propaganda does not present the barbarians as a melting-pot of tribes, but finally accepts their status as federations, deserv-

terza Roma 3 (Naples, 1986), pp. 63–146; Thomas Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus. Herrschaftspropaganda in der zeitgenössischen Überlieferung* (Stuttgart, 1990); Johannes Wienand, *Der Kaiser als Sieger. Metamorphosen triumphaler Herrschaft unter Constantin I.*, *Klio. Beiheft Neue Folge* 19, Akademie Verlag (Berlin, 2012).

10 On the ideological analogies between the Roman and the Sassanian empires see Matthew Canepa, *The two eyes of the Earth: art and rituals of kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran*, *The transformation of the classical heritage* 45 (Berkeley, 2009). On Constantine as *rector* see Wienand, *Der Kaiser als Sieger*, pp. 387–390.

11 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 7.1 (trans. Averil Cameron): Συνεχεῖς γοῦν ἀπανταχόθεν οἱ διαπρεσβευόμενοι δῶρα τὰ παρ’ αὐτοῖς πολυτελὴ διεκρίμιζον, ὥς καὶ αὐτοὺς ποτε παρατυχόντας ἡμᾶς πρὸ τῆς αὐλείου τῶν βασιλείων πυλῶν στοιχηδὸν ἐν τάξει περίβλεπτα σχήματα βαρβάρων ἐστῶτα θεάσασθαι, οἷς ἑξαλλος μὲν ἡ στολή, διαλλάττων δ’ ὁ τῶν σχημάτων τρόπος, κόμη τε κεφαλῆς καὶ γενείου πάμπλου διεστῶσα, βλοσυρῶν τε ἦν προσώπων βάρβαρος καὶ καταπληκτικὴ τις ὄψις, σωματῶν θ’ ἡλικίας ὑπερβάλλοντα μεγέθη· καὶ οἷς μὲν ἐρυθραίνετο τὰ πρόσωπα, οἷς δὲ λευκότερα χιόνος ἦν, οἷς δ’ ἐβένου καὶ πίττης μελάντερα, οἱ δὲ μέσης μετεῖχον κράσεως, ἐπεὶ καὶ Βλεμμύων γένη Ἰνδῶν τε καὶ Αἰθιοπῶν, οἱ διχθὰ δεδαίταται ἔσχατοιάνδρων, τῇ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐθεωρεῖτο ἱστορία.

12 Wienand, *Der Kaiser als Sieger*, p. 167; 308.

ing to be considered as states.¹³ Consequently, a good imperial functionary needed at least to acquire a basic knowledge of administrative geography. Exotic, classical names were left to highbrow rhetors, who despised the rough education of *scholastici*, as we know very well from Libanius.¹⁴ Some documents coming from the schooldays of imperial functionary can possibly be found in *glossaria*, *laterculi* and gazetteers such as the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*. Another example may be found in the Verona List, a short but precious text attesting the administrative situation of 314, when the division in dioceses was operational.¹⁵

Other elements reflect the sensitivity for geography developed during the Tetrarchy. In fact, the division of East and West is a consequence of the agreement of 314 between Constantine and Licinius, after a long struggle for the power. Around 313, Constantine and Licinius are both celebrated as *rector orbis terrae* in two twin inscriptions of the governor of Sicily.¹⁶ A golden medallion struck in Treviri (between 313 and 315?), with the inscription “to the glory of both *Augusti*”, but with the portrait of Constantine alone, is particularly interesting for the iconography on the reverse. This shows the usual iconography of a walled fortress, or a city, standing beside a body of water; a statue of Victory stands over the gate. Two defeated barbarians are sitting outside the fortress. The barbarian on the left has long hair and a beard, while the other wears a typical Oriental cap (Fig. 3.1).

For a long time, this medallion was interpreted as the first picture of the city of Treviri.¹⁷ But in my opinion, the mention of both *Augusti* and the presence of the defeated barbarians give this double *solidus* a more complex significa-

- 13 These coins were distributed as *donativa*: see Pierre Bastien, *Monnaie et donativa au Bas-Empire* (Wetteren, 1988), p. 76. See also Andreas Goltz, “Franken und Alamannen zur Zeit der Tetrarchie – Überlegungen zu ihrer Ersterwähnung und Ethnogenese zu dem Hintergrund tetrarchischer Herrschaftsstrukturen,” in *Diokletian und die Tetrarchie. Aspekte einer Zeitenwende*, eds. Alexander Demandt, Andreas Goltz and Heinrich Schlange-Schöningh, Millennium-Studien 1 (Berlin-New York, 2004), pp. 95–114.
- 14 See Marilena Casella, *Storie di ordinaria corruzione. Libanio, Orazioni LVI, LVII, XLVI. Introduzione, Traduzione e Commento storico* (Messina, 2010), pp. 27–34.
- 15 Constantin Zuckerman, “Sur la Liste de Vérone et la province de Grande Arménie, la division de l’Empire et la date de création des diocèses,” *Travaux & Mémoires* 14, Mélanges Gilbert Dagron (2002), pp. 617–637.
- 16 ILS, n° 677; *Année épigraphique* 1966, n° 166.
- 17 RIC Constantine, Treveri 1. Literature in Maria R.-Alföldi, “Das Trierer Stadtbild auf Constantins Goldmultiplum: ein Jahrhundertirrtum,” 1991 = *Gloria Romanorum. Schriften zur Spätantike*, Historia Einzelschriften 153 (Stuttgart, 2001), pp. 143–153. This article tries to show that the fortress represented on the medallion is the *castellum Divitia* near Cologne.



FIGURE 3.1

Reverse of a golden medallion from Treviri. Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 18200450.

PHOTO BY LUTZ-JÜRGEN LÜBKE.

tion. In fact, the fortress represents the Empire as a whole, a stronghold ruling the Mediterranean Sea, well protected by the couple of *Augusti*, defending the West from the Germans and the East from the Persians. On the other hand, the fortress recalls the only *Augustus* represented on the medallion, whose main residence was in Treviri. In other words, there is only one Empire, and soon there will be only one Emperor. This is confirmed by an inscription of Surrentum, honoring Constantine as *instauratori orbis terrarum perpetuo/ ac piissimo*. This division into two *partes* persists even after Licinius' defeat in 324, and will mark one of the main contradictions of the Late Roman Empire, where the ideological concern of unity does not really match the administrative and juridical reality. The geographical unity is also reflected by Constantine's letter of convocation (only preserved in Syriac) to the Council of Nicaea in 324. Although most bishops were coming from the East, the "bishop of those outside" (*episkopos tōn ektos*) insists on the opportunity of the choice of Nicaea in order to allow a good number of Western bishops to participate to the assembly.¹⁸

18 Urkunde 20, in Hans-Georg Opitz, *Urkunden zur Geschichte der arianischen Streitigkeiten* (Leipzig 1934–1935), pp. 31–42: "I believe it is obvious to everyone that there is nothing more honorable in my sight than the fear of God. Though it was formerly agreed that the synod of bishops should meet at Ancyra in Galatia, it seemed to us for many reasons that it would be well for the synod to assemble at Nicaea, a city of Bithynia, both because the Bishops from Italy and the rest of the countries of Europe are coming, and because of the excellent temperature of the air, and in order that I may be present as a spectator and participator in those things which will be done. Therefore I announce to you, my beloved brothers, that all of you promptly assemble at the said city, that is at Nicaea. Let every one of you therefore, as I said before, keep the greater good in mind and be diligent, without delay in anything, to come speedily, that each may be physically present as a spectator of

The discovery of a Christian geography was stimulated by the practice of the *peregrinatio religiosa*.¹⁹ In the last years of Constantine's reign, an anonymous pilgrim, possibly a high official of the Empire, compiles the *Bordeaux Itinerary*, which describes the journey he started in the spring of 333, and concluded about one year after – a return trip from Bordeaux to Jerusalem, more than 5,000 Roman miles. At first sight, this text seems an arid gazetteer with no particular theological interest, and definitely less interesting than the *Peregrinatio Egeriae*, written two generations later. Nonetheless, we find several interesting hints to the historical and religious memory of the places and cities. The pilgrim highlights four metropolises (Milan, Rome, Constantinople and, obviously, Jerusalem), and it is not surprising to notice his limited interest in a glorious city like Antioch, and even in Constantinople.²⁰ In fact, for the imagination of a Christian the only possible metropolis is Jerusalem.²¹ But as early as 333, most of the Jewish and Christian *lieux de mémoire* in Jerusalem were still covered by the structures of *Aelia Capitolina*.²² In a way, the Anonymous pilgrim describes a Jerusalem which is more mental than real:

There are in Jerusalem two large pools (*piscinae*) at the side of the temple (*ad latus templi*), that is, one upon the right hand, and one upon the left, which were made by Solomon; and further in the city are twin pools (*piscinae gemellares*), with five porticoes, which are called Bethsaida [...]. Here is also the corner of an exceeding high tower, where our Lord ascended [...] Under the pinnacle of the tower are many rooms, and here

those things which will be done. God keep you my beloved brothers". On the authenticity of the letter see Richard P.C. Hanson. *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids, 1988), pp. 146–151.

- 19 Pierre Maraval, *Lieux Saints et pèlerinages d'Orient* (Paris, 1985); Michel-Yves Perrin "Le nouveau style missionnaire: la conquête de l'espace et du temps," in *Histoire du Christianisme. 2. Naissance d'une chrétienté (250–430)*, eds. Jean-Marie Mayeur, Charles Pietri (†), Luce Pietri, André Vauchez and Marc Venard (Paris, 1995), pp. 585–621; Béatrice Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes," in *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World*, eds. Glen W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, Mass.-London 1999), pp. 21–59; Jan Willem Drijvers, "Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth: some new reflections," *Millennium* 8 (2011), 125–174.
- 20 Benet Salway, "There but Not There: Constantinople in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*," in *Two Romes. Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, eds. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford, 2012), pp. 293–324.
- 21 John Matthews, "The cultural landscape of the Bordeaux Itinerary," in *Roman Perspectives. Studies in the Social, Political and Cultural history of the First to the Fifth Centuries*, id. (Swansea, 2010), pp. 181–200.
- 22 Hagith Sivan, *Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2008).

was Solomon's palace. [...] And in the building (*in aede*) itself, where stood the temple which Solomon built, they say that the blood of Zacharias which was shed upon the stone pavement before the altar remains to this day. There are also to be seen the marks of the nails in the shoes of the soldiers who slew him, throughout the whole enclosure, so plain that you would think they were impressed upon wax. There are two statues of Hadrian, and not far from the statues there is a perforated stone to which the Jews come every year and anoint it, bewail themselves with groans, rend their garments, and so depart. There also is the house of Hezekiah King of Judah. Also as you come out of Jerusalem to go up Mount Sion [...] From thence as you go out of the wall of Sion, as you walk towards the gate of Neapolis, towards the right, below in the valley, are walls, where was the house or praetorium of Pontius Pilate. Here our Lord was tried before His passion. On the left hand is the little hill of Golgotha where the Lord was crucified. About a stone's throw from thence is a vault wherein His body was laid, and rose again on the third day. There, at present, by the command of the Emperor Constantine, has been built a basilica, that is to say, a church (*dominicum*) of wondrous beauty, having at the side reservoirs (*excepturia*) from which water is raised, and a bath behind in which infants are washed (baptized). Also as one goes from Jerusalem to the East Gate, in order to ascend the Mount of Olives ...²³

- 23 *Itinerary of Bordeaux*, 589–594: Sunt in Hierusalem piscinae magnae duae ad latus templi, id est una ad dexteram, alia ad sinistram, quas Salomon fecit, interius uero ciuitati sunt piscinae gemellares quinque porticus habentes, quae appellantur Behtsaida [...] Ibi est angulus turris excelsissimae, ubi dominus ascendit [...] Et sub pinna turris ipsius sunt cubicula plurima, ubi Salomon palatium habebat? [...] Et in aede ipsa, ubi templum fuit, quem Salomon aedificauit, in marmore ante aram sanguinem Zachariae ibi dicas hodie fusum; etiam parent uestigia clauorum militum, qui eum occiderunt, per totam aream, ut putes in cera fixum esse. Sunt ibi et statuae duae Hadriani; est et non longe de statuas lapis pertusus, ad quem ueniunt Iudaei singulis annis et unguent eum et lamentant se cum gemitu et uestimenta sua scindunt et sic recedunt. Est ibi et domus Ezechiae regis Iudae. Item exeuntibus hierusalem, ut ascendas Sion. Est ibi et domus ezechiae regis iudae. Item exeuntibus hierusalem, ut ascendas [...] Inde ut eas foris murum de sion, euntibus ad portam neapolitanam ad partem dextram deorsum in ualle sunt parietes, ubi domus fuit siue praetorium pontii pilati; ibi dominus auditus est, antequam pateretur. A sinistra autem parte est monticulus golgotha, ubi dominus crucifixus est. Inde quasi ad lapidem missum est cripta, ubi corpus eius positum fuit et tertia die resurrexit; ibidem modo iussu Constantini imperatoris basilica facta est, id est dominicum, mirae pulchritudinis habens ad latus excepturia, unde aqua leuatur, et balneum a tergo, ubi infantes lauantur. Item ad hierusalem euntibus ad portam, quae est contra orientem, ut ascendatur in monte Oliueti...

Should we see in this description, as it has been recently written, a “mechanism of appropriation and expropriation of the Jewish memory and space”?²⁴ True, the Pilgrim makes a selective operation, in order to recover a city which Eusebius considered as a new Jerusalem.²⁵ Just to give one example, the “*piscina probatica*” at Bethesda, where Jesus healed the cripple, is described as a Christian *lieu de mémoire* (as it was at least from the times of Origen), but in fact was a traditional place of healing for the Jews, and, as the archeological evidence confirms, for the pagans too.

In any case, if the pilgrim of Bordeaux confirms the new identity taken by Jerusalem, he does not accomplish the same operation for Constantinople. The *Itinerary* mentions a series of *civitates*, but only one *Urbs* – Rome, but this is not surprising, as the Pilgrim came from the West, and Constantine’s new capital was dedicated only three years before.²⁶ In a seminal study on the imperial residences from 284 to 337, Jean-Pierre Reboul demonstrated that under the Tetrarchy and Constantine, the favorite residences were still Rome, Treviri and Sirmium.²⁷ Some years after Constantine’s death, Iulius Valerius, the author of a Latin translation of the *Romance of Alexander* as well as of an *Itinerarium Alexandri* (and possibly of Trajan too), names the “largest *urbes* of the oikoumene”, according to the circuit of their wall: this time we have Antioch, Carthage, Babylon, Rome and finally Alexandria.²⁸ Despite its important circuit of walls, Constantinople is still missing. Delving further into the study of the hierarchy of cities, we may also consider the Calendar of 354, whose Renaissance copies present the iconography of four imperial Tychai: the Western, Urban-centered Philocalus considers here Rome, Carthage, Constantinople and Treviri.²⁹ This is again less than surprising, as *Roma aeterna*, even after the

24 See Oded Irshai, “The Christian Appropriation of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century: The Case of the Bordeaux Pilgrim,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99 (2009), 465–486 (476).

25 Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.33.135.

26 See also Dariusz Brodka, *Die Romideologie in der römischen Literatur in der Spätantike* (Berlin, 1998).

27 Jean-Pierre Reboul, “L’*Ordo urbium nobilium* d’Ausone au regard des évolutions de la centralité politique dans l’Antiquité tardive. Approches historique et archéologique,” *Schedae* 8.1 (2007), 107–140. See also Lucy Grig, “Competing Capitals, Competing Representations: Late Antique Cityscapes in Words and Pictures,” in *Two Romes*, pp. 31–52.

28 Jean-Pierre Callu, “Antioche la Grande: la cohérence des chiffres,” 1997 = *Culture profane et critique des sources de l’Antiquité tardive. Trente et une études de 1974 à 2003* (Rome, 2006), pp. 643–685.

29 Annette Haug, “Das spätantike Rombild zwischen Visualisierung und Imagination,” in *Das antike Rom und sein Bild*, eds. Hans-Ulrich Cain, Annette Haug, Yadegar Asisi (Berlin-New York, 2011), pp. 69–91.

sacks of Alaric and of the Vandals in the fifth century, will still keep a major place in the mental map of Late antiquity.³⁰ But in Philocalus' mental map (the calendar of 354 presents several texts connected to the topography of the *Urbs*) Rome is more than one of the four main imperial residences: it is the centre of the Empire, whereas Carthage, Constantinople and Treviri are the strongholds destined to control the three parts of the world, that is, Africa, Asia, and Europe, as well as their frontiers.

Written in the same period, the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* (originally composed in Greek) presents a Late antique *inventaire du monde*, but this time with less consideration for the military aspects, and with a stronger concern for the civil affairs. For example, the abundant riches of the provinces (apart from Greece and Africa) and of the cities are an important point of this text. For this reason, the *Expositio* has been considered the work of a trader.³¹ More likely, it is the work of an Oriental 'sophist', who wrote a pamphlet destined to teaching, similar to the geographical gazetteer of Vibius Sequester. The same concern for geography can also be detected in the Pseudo-Hegesippus, a fourth-century Latin translator of Josephus' *Jewish War* who eventually integrated the text with some interesting observations, such as "the Euphrates is Roman": according to Pseudo-Hegesippus this river, which hitherto was inaccessible on both banks, is going to prefigure the next conquest of the East. At the same time Armenia, the faithful ally of the Romans, keeps calm and controls the mountain passes, ready to reject the troubles from external enemies.³² This context seems to reflect the geopolitical situation after the battle of Singara in 344, as we can also see from Libanius' *Basilikon*.

To sum up, the recovery of the Empire after the Tetrarchy favoured the development of new geographies and cosmographies, more or less expressed by their authors' minds. True, it is more difficult to detect the fictional and ideological elements in the literary sources or even in the epigraphic titulatures. And, of course, literary texts may be conservative, leaving a classical appear-

30 Gudrun Bühl, *Constantinopolis und Rom: Stadtpersonifikationen der Spätantike* (Kilchberg, 1995).

31 Afterwards, scholars pointed at an imperial official, but this is also less than probable, as the text presents some administrative incongruencies, and also thinks that the « Noricum » was a city. See Concetta Molé, "Le tensioni dell'utopia. L'organizzazione dello spazio in alcuni testi tardoantichi," in *Le trasformazioni della cultura nella tarda antichità*, eds. Mario Mazza and Claudia Giuffrida (Rome, 1985), pp. 691–736.

32 Ps. Heges. 2.9.1. Jean-Pierre Callu, "Le 'De bello Iudaico' du Pseudo-Hégesippe. Essai de datation," 1987 = *Culture profane*, pp. 597–622. The author of this text has been identified with Ambrose of Milan: Chiara Somenzi, *Egesippo-Ambrogio: formazione scolastica e cristiana a Roma alla metà del IV secolo* (Milan, 2009).

ance obscuring major structural phenomena: this is the “Pseudomorphose” observed by Spengler and taken into serious consideration by scholars like Eduard Meyer, Henri-Irénée Marrou and Santo Mazzarino.³³

Of course, political events had a strong influence on these new conceptions and ‘Inventaires’ of the oikoumene. After all, the Roman Empire was not an *imperium sine fine* anymore, and the *limites* were a reality, confirmed by the evolution of the military dispositions between the Tetrarchy and Constantine’s reign, and later.³⁴ The next step may be observed in the geographical digressions of Ammianus and, more generally, in all texts dealing with the barbarians, now present in every aspect of daily life in Late Antiquity. There was no longer chance to reject the tensions and the anxieties as in the classical past.³⁵

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33 See Hervé Inglebert, *Interpretatio Christiana: Les mutations des savoirs (cosmographie, géographie, ethnographie, histoire) dans l’Antiquité chrétienne (30–630 après J.-C.)*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes 166 (Paris, 2001).

34 Tiberianus, *apud* Serv. *In Verg. Aen.* 6.532; see Silvia Mattiacci, *I carmi e i frammenti di Tiberiano* (Firenze, 1990); Gabriella Moretti, *Gli Antipodi. Avventure letterarie di un mito scientifico* (Parma, 1994), p. 46.

35 Fabrizio Feraco, *Ammiano geografo. La digressione sulla Persia* (Naples, 2004); *Ammiano geografo. Nuovi studi* (Naples, 2011); Wiebke Vergin, *Das Imperium Romanum und seine Gegenwelten. Die geographisch-ethnographische Exkurse in den ‘Res Gestae’ des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Berlin-Boston, 2013).

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Die Synode von Serdika 343: Das Scheitern eines ökumenischen Konzils und seine Folgen für die Einheit der Reichskirche

Josef Rist

Am 28. Oktober des Jahres 312 wird am nördlichen Zugang zur Stadt Rom, in der weiten Ebene oberhalb des Tiber, in unmittelbarer Nähe zur Milvischen Brücke und kaum drei Kilometer von der Porta Flaminia entfernt, Weltgeschichte geschrieben. Der junge Konstantin, den christliche Historiographen bald schon den Großen nennen werden, wagt es, nach der Alleinherrschaft im Westen des Römischen Reiches zu greifen und seinen Widersacher Maxentius zur Entscheidungsschlacht herauszufordern. Das Wagnis gelingt: Maxentius verliert Schlacht und Leben, Konstantin triumphiert.¹ Am Ende des denkwürdigen Tages ist Konstantin Herrscher über die Stadt Rom und den Westen des Imperiums. Im Jahr 324 kann er schließlich mit Licinius, dem Herrscher des Ostens, auch den letzten ernstzunehmenden Rivalen ausschalten und die Herrschaft über das Reich in seiner Hand vereinigen. Bereits nach der Schlacht an der Milvischen Brücke beginnt Konstantin das Christentum zu fördern. Es beginnt das, was als Konstantinisches Zeitalter zu einem viel diskutierten Epochenbegriff wird, die durch Konstantin eingeleitete enge Verbindung von Staat und Kirche.²

- 1 Eine materialreiche Darstellung der Schlacht und ihrer propagandistischen Instrumentalisierung bietet Wolfgang Kuhoff, "Ein *Mythos* in der römischen Geschichte: Der Sieg Konstantins des Großen über Maxentius vor den Toren Roms am 28. Oktober 312 n. Chr.," *Chiron* 21 (1991), 27–174. Militärische Details: ebd. 147–162. Für die konstantinische Religionspolitik einschlägig sind die Arbeiten von Klaus Martin Girardet, insbesondere ders., *Der Kaiser und sein Gott. Das Christentum im Denken und in der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen*, Millennium-Studien 27 (Berlin, 2010).
- 2 Zu Ursprung, Konzeption und Kritik des Begriffs vgl. Christoph Marksches, "Wann endet das 'Konstantinische Zeitalter'?" in *Die Weltlichkeit des Glaubens in der Alten Kirche. Festschrift Ulrich Wickert*, ed. Dietmar Wyrwa, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 85 (Berlin, 1997), pp. 157–188. Nach Wilhelm Schneemelder bezeichnet das Konstantinische Zeitalter die Jahre zwischen 312 (Schlacht an der Milvischen Brücke) und 380 (Edikt *Cunctos populos* des Kaisers Theodosius). Vgl. ebd. p. 169.

Aus der Sicht nicht nur der Zeitgenossen schien nach diesen Ereignissen die Einheit des Reiches für absehbare Zeit sichergestellt. Die Herrschaft eines Kaisers, eine staatstragende Religion – aus christlicher Perspektive, etwa der des Kirchenhistorikers Eusebius von Caesarea, natürlich die christliche – und ein nach langen inneren Kämpfen endlich befriedetes Reich sollten sich ergänzen und gegenseitig stützen.³ Doch spätestens mit dem Tod des Kaisers im Jahr 337 holt die Realität diese Vorstellungen wieder ein. Ein erbitterter Kampf um die Macht entbrennt zwischen Konstantin II., Konstans und Konstantius II., den drei Söhnen des Kaisers, unter denen das Reichsgebiet vom Vater aufgeteilt wurde. Nicht zuletzt die von Konstantin eingeleitete enge Verbindung zwischen Staat und Kirche erweist sich jetzt als Bumerang und beschädigt angesichts der verbissenen Konflikte um die theologischen Positionen des alexandrinischen Presbyters Arius die erst vor kurzem gewonnene Einheit des Reiches.

Einen ersten Höhepunkt finden die theologischen Konflikte zwischen den beiden Reichsteilen in Serdika im Jahr 343. Ursprünglich als ökumenische Bischofsversammlung geplant, die die theologische Einheit des Reiches wiederherstellen sollte, wird hier der tiefe Bruch sichtbar, der sich nicht nur zwischen den an den Debatten beteiligten Kirchenparteien, sondern auch zwischen den beiden Reichsteilen aufgebaut hatte. Durch die Vorgänge in Serdika wird erstmals eine tiefe theologische Entfremdung innerhalb der Reichskirche zwischen Ost und West sichtbar. Im Laufe der Jahrhunderte setzt sich unter wechselnden politischen und theologischen Prämissen dieser Prozess fort und findet schließlich seinen Endpunkt in der demonstrativ erklärten Aufkündigung der Kirchengemeinschaft zwischen Rom und Byzanz im Jahr 1054.⁴

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- 3 Zu Konstantins religionspolitischen Zukunftsplänen vgl. Girardet, *Kaiser*, pp. 150–163. Sein pointiertes, nicht unumstrittenes Resümee (ebd. p. 162): „Konstantins politische Intention ging also dahin, im Einklang mit dem Willen seines Gottes den religiösen Pluralismus im Reich und auf der Welt insgesamt allmählich zum Verschwinden zu bringen, das Christentum zur alleinigen Reichs- und Menschheitsreligion zu machen.“ Zu Eusebius vgl. Gerhard Ruhbach, „Die politische Theologie Eusebs von Caesarea,“ in *Die Kirche angesichts der konstantinischen Wende*, ed. ders., Wege der Forschung 306 (Darmstadt, 1976), pp. 236–58.
 - 4 Vgl. Leslie W. Barnard, *The council of Serdica 343 A.D.* (Sofia, 1983), p. 5: „that the Council of Serdica ... marked the beginning of this process for there East and West separated by conciliar decision for the first time.“ Zum Schisma von 1054 und seiner Vorgeschichte vgl. Axel Beyer, *Spaltung der Christenheit. Das sogenannte Morgenländische Schisma von 1054*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 53 (Köln, 2002).

Die Ausgangslage

Spätestens ab dem Jahr 327 beginnt Kaiser Konstantin unter steter Beeinflussung seiner theologischen Entourage seine Haltung zum Arianismus zu verändern. Hatte er zuvor die gegen Arius und seine Lehre gerichteten Beschlüsse des ersten ökumenischen Konzils von Nizäa 325 bestätigt und die wenigen Bischöfe, die sich dieser Entscheidung entgegenstellen (unter ihnen Bischof Eusebius von Nikomedien), verbannt, so betreibt er nun aktiv die Versöhnung mit der arianischen Kirchenpartei.⁵ Bereits im Sommer 326 verlässt mit dem spanischen Bischof Ossius von Cordoba ein wichtiger theologischer Berater und Unterstützer des nizänischen Glaubens den Kaiserhof. Zielscheiben des nun einsetzenden Kampfes gegen die Gegner des Arius im Episkopat sind insbesondere die Bischöfe Eustathius von Antiochien (Datum der Absetzung umstritten: 326 bzw. 328, „Auftakt zu einer längeren Reihe ähnlicher Maßnahmen“⁶), Athanasius von Alexandrien⁷ und Markell von Ancyra.⁸ Über die Rechtgläubigkeit der beiden letztgenannten „Anti-‘Eusebianer’“⁹ werden auch die in Serdika versammelten Bischöfe kontrovers diskutieren.

Wenige Bemerkungen mögen zur reichspolitischen Situation genügen. Mit dem Tod Konstantins am 22. Mai des Jahres 337 wird die Herrschaft im Römischen Reich wieder aufgeteilt. Die Konstantinssöhne Konstantin II., Konstantius II. und Konstans erhalten jeweils einen Teil des Imperiums als Herrschaftsgebiet zugesprochen.¹⁰ Schon bald kommt es zum Zerwürfnis unter den Brüdern. Als Ergebnis eines blutigen Bürgerkrieges kann der jüngste Sohn Konstans im Jahr 340 seinen älteren Bruder Konstantin II., der über den Nord-

5 Vgl. zu Kirchenpolitik Konstantins nach dem Konzil von Nikaia: Charles Pietri, Christoph Marksches, „Theologische Diskussionen zur Zeit Konstantins: Arius, der „arianische Streit“ und das Konzil von Nizäa, die nachnizänischen Auseinandersetzungen bis 337,“ in *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion-Politik-Kultur. Altertum 2: Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250–430)*, eds. Charles und Luce Pietri (Freiburg, 1999), pp. 317–340.

6 Ebd. 324.

7 Standardwerk: Peter Gemeinhardt, ed., *Athanasius Handbuch* (Tübingen, 2011).

8 Vgl. Sara Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy 325–345*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2006).

9 Pietri, Marksches, *Theologische Diskussionen*, p. 327. Namensgeber der Eusebianer ist wahrscheinlich Bischof Eusebius von Nikomedien.

10 Zu den Plänen Konstantins und ihrer Umsetzung vgl. Heinrich Chantraine, *Die Nachfolgeordnung Konstantins des Großen*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse, Jahrgang 1992, Heft 7 (Stuttgart, 1992) sowie Richard Klein, „Die Kämpfe um die Nachfolge nach dem Tode Konstantins des Großen,“ *Byzantinische Forschungen* 6 (1979), 101–150.

westen des Imperiums (Gallien, Britannien, Spanien) gebot, besiegen; dieser findet in den Kämpfen den Tod. Damit ist die von Konstantin projektierte Nachfolgeregelung für das Reich endgültig zerfallen. Jetzt stehen sich der Westen des Reiches unter der Regentschaft des Konstans und der Ostteil unter Konstantius II. abwartend gegenüber.¹¹

Die Aufteilung des Reiches unter zwei Kaiser hat auch für den Episkopat gravierende Folgen; sie macht die Kirchenpolitik zunächst für alle Beteiligten "wesentlich komplizierter".¹² Der theologische Konflikt um die Lehre des Arius und der kirchenpolitische Kampf um die Rechtgläubigkeit einzelner östlicher Bischöfe wie Athanasius und Markell von Ancyra verbindet sich eng mit dem machtpolitischen Ringen zwischen den beiden Reichsteilen um die Vorherrschaft. Dabei bemühen sich einerseits die verschiedenen Kirchenparteien um die Gunst der Kaiser, andererseits sind diese wiederum "massiv daran interessiert, mit Hilfe der Loyalität von Bischöfen einerseits die Machtposition im eigenen Herrschaftsgebiet zu stärken und andererseits im jeweils anderen Reichsteil an Einfluss zu gewinnen."¹³

In den Jahren vor den Synoden in Serdika steht die Person und Theologie des alexandrinischen Bischofs Athanasius im Mittelpunkt der kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen. Seit seiner umstrittenen Wahl zum Bischof von Alexandrien am 8. Juni 328 sind Konflikte die ständigen Begleiter des streitbaren Kirchenmannes.¹⁴ Neben lokalen ägyptischen Problemfeldern wird Athanasius insbesondere sein unerschütterliches Festhalten am nizänischen Glauben zum Vorwurf gemacht. Einen ersten Höhepunkt findet der Konflikt im Jahr 335, als Athanasius von einer in Tyrus versammelten Synode als Bischof abgesetzt und von Kaiser Konstantin in sein erstes Exil nach Trier geschickt wird.¹⁵ Der Streit um die kirchenrechtliche Gültigkeit des in Tyrus

11 Die häufig postulierte Vormundschaft Konstantin II. über seinen jüngeren Bruder darf heute als widerlegt gelten. Zu den komplexen Vorgängen des Jahres 340 vgl. Bruno Bleckmann, "Der Bürgerkrieg zwischen Constantin II. und Constans (340)," *Historia* 52 (2003), 225–250.

12 Charles Pietri, Jörg Ulrich, "Von der partitio des christlichen Kaiserreichs bis zur Einheit unter Konstantius: Arianerstreit und erster "Caesaropapismus"," in *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion-Politik-Kultur. Altertum 2: Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250–430)*, eds. Charles und Luce Pietri (Freiburg, 1999), p. 348.

13 Vgl. Jörg Ulrich, *Die Anfänge der abendländischen Rezeption des Nizänums*, Patristische Texte und Studien 39 (Berlin, 1994), p. 29.

14 Kurze Biographie mit weiterführender Literatur: Tobias Georges, "Der Bischof von Alexandrien," in *Athanasius Handbuch*, ed. Peter Gemeinhardt (Tübingen, 2011), pp. 82–93.

15 Vgl. ebd. 85f. Ausführlicher zur Synode von Tyrus als vollkommener Ausdruck der konstantinischen Staat-Kirche-Beziehung: Klaus Martin Girardet, *Kaisergericht und Bischofs-*

ergangenen Absetzungsurteils, von dessen Rechtmäßigkeit die östlichen Bischöfe überzeugt sind, bildet den Kern der in den folgenden Jahren mit großer Intensität einerseits von Athanasius, aber auch von seinen Gegnern geführten Auseinandersetzungen. Bleibt der Appell des alexandrinischen Kirchenmannes an Kaiser Konstantin zunächst erfolglos, so kann er jedoch bereits 337 nach dessen Tod gegen den ausdrücklichen Willen der östlichen Bischöfe¹⁶ mit Erlaubnis des Kaisers Konstantius II. nach Alexandrien zurück. Als schließlich der östliche Herrscher im Jahr 339 die Einsetzung des Kappadokiens Gregor als Bischof von Alexandrien billigt und Athanasius in einer recht rabiaten Polizeiaktion vertrieben wird, flieht Athanasius in den Westen und sucht Schutz und Unterstützung in Rom beim dortigen Bischof Julius.¹⁷

Der römische Bischof spielt für den weiteren Fortgang der komplexen Angelegenheit eine wichtige Rolle. In Rom wird Athanasius herzlich in die Gemeinschaft der Ortsgemeinde aufgenommen. Rasch entwickelt sich die Stadt zum Sammelpunkt zahlreicher östlicher Bischöfe, die sich durch die im Osten dominierenden Eusebianer ebenfalls in ihrer Treue zum Nizänum bedrängt und verfolgt sehen. Schließlich trifft auch Markell von Ancyra, in dessen Bischofsstadt es ebenfalls zu gewaltsamen Auseinandersetzungen gekommen ist, in Rom ein.¹⁸ Ziel des römischen Bischofs ist es, die Causa Athanasius erneut aufzurollen. Zu diesem Zweck lädt er eine östliche Delegation zu einer Synode nach Rom ein.¹⁹ Die Einladung ist mit einer Fristsetzung verbunden. Der Osten lehnt ab, was Julius aber nicht daran hindert, im Frühjahr 341 zusammen mit 50 anderen Bischöfen aus Italien die Bischofsversammlung abzuhalten. Ihr Ergebnis ist, dass sowohl Athanasius als auch Markell von Ankyra von den im

gericht. *Studien zu den Anfängen des Donatistenstreites (313–315) und zum Prozeß des Athanasius von Alexandrien (328–346)*, *Antiquitas* 1/21 (Bonn, 1975), pp. 66–75.

- 16 Vgl. Sozomenos, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.2.8, eds. Joseph Bidez und Günther Christian Hansen (Berlin, 1995), p.103, line 14–16; Übersetzung: Günther Christian Hansen, *Fontes Christiani* 73,2 (Turnhout, 2004), p. 337: „Eusebius nämlich und seine Freunde versuchten ihn eifernd beim Kaiser (sc. Constantius) als Unruhestifter zu verleumden, der entgegen den bischöflichen Gesetzen (παρά τοὺς νόμους τῆς ἐκκλησίας) sich selbst ohne bischöfliche Bestätigung die Rückkehr angemaßt habe.“
- 17 Vgl. Annick Martin, *Athanase d’Alexandrie et l’Église d’Égypte au IV^e siècle (328–373)*, Collection de l’École française de Rome 216 (Rom, 1996), pp. 403–409. Übersichtskarte zum Aufenthalt des Athanasius außerhalb Ägyptens: ebd. 397.
- 18 Vgl. Pietri, Ulrich, *Von der partitio*, p. 351. Eintreffen des Markell: “Ende 339 oder Anfang 340” (Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 32).
- 19 Der Brief des Julius ist nicht erhalten, wohl aber ein Regest bei Sozomenos, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.8.3, *Athanasius Werke*, eds. Hanns Christof Brennecke, Uta Heil, Annette von Stockhausen, Angelika Wintjes, 1. Teil, 3. Lieferung (Berlin, 2007), Nr. 41 (pp. 137f.).

Osten gegen sie erhobenen Vorwürfen freigesprochen werden und die Kirchengemeinschaft mit ihnen bestätigt wird. Über dieses Vorgehen informiert der römische Bischof Julius die östlichen Amtsbrüder in einem ausführlichen Brief, den Athanasius überliefert, und der auf die östliche Verweigerung der Teilnahme an der Synode antwortet.²⁰

Zu Recht hat Jörg Ulrich in seiner luziden Darstellung darauf hingewiesen, dass die beiden Streitfälle Athanasius und Markell von Ancyra höchst unterschiedlich gelagert sind.²¹ Beim Konflikt um Athanasius geht es primär um eine kirchenrechtliche Frage, nämlich die Gültigkeit der im Osten gegen den alexandrinischen Bischof erfolgten Synodalentscheidungen. Anders gelagert ist der Fall des Markell von Ankyra. Hier steht die umstrittene Theologie des Bischofs und damit seine Rechtgläubigkeit im Mittelpunkt der Angriffe. Noch zu Lebzeiten Konstantins war Markell, der eine höchst komplexe Trinitätslehre entwickelt und sich als Gegner der Eusebianer profiliert hatte, von einer Synode in Konstantinopel (Juli 336 oder Anfang 337) als Häretiker abgesetzt und exiliert worden.²² Dennoch bilden in der Wahrnehmung des Jahres 341 beide Streitfälle aus westlicher Sicht eine unauflösliche Einheit. Dies kommt im Brief des römischen Bischofs Julius deutlich zum Ausdruck: Das Schreiben entlastet den alexandrinischen Bischof von den diversen, auf den vorangegangenen Synoden gegen ihn erhobenen, nicht dogmatischen Vorwürfen, während Markell vom Verdacht der Häresie freigesprochen wird.²³ Damit hatte sich der

20 Der Brief des Julius bei Athanasius, *Apologia (secunda) contra Arianos* 21–35. Text und Übersetzung bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 41.8 (pp. 156–175). Ausführliches Referat und Analyse: Girardet, *Kaisergericht*, pp. 87–105. Zur römischen Synode vgl. Martin, *Athanase*, pp. 410–419.

21 Vgl. Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 27.

22 Die Nachrichten über diese Synode sind gesammelt bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 40 (pp. 132–136). Zur Datierung und zum Verlauf vgl. Parvis, *Marcellus*, pp. 127–132. Bischofsliste: ebd. 259. Vgl. ebd. 131: "The deposition of Marcellus is irrefutable proof, if any more were needed, of the political brilliance of the Eusebian alliance." Zur konsequent trinitarisch gedachten Theologie des Markell vgl. Klaus Seibt, *Die Theologie des Markell von Ankyra*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 59 (Berlin, 1994).

23 Vgl. die Zusammenfassung bei Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 33. Julius kann feststellen (Text: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, p. 160, line 11–22; Übersetzung: ebd.): „Denn die Häresie der Ariomaniten wurde von allen Bischöfen überall verurteilt und verboten, die Bischöfe Athanasius und Markell aber haben ziemlich viele, die für sie aussagen und schreiben. Denn über Markell wurde uns bezeugt, daß er auch auf der Synode in Nicaea denen, die arianisch dachten, widerstand, von Athanasius aber wurde uns bezeugt, dass er auch in Tyrus nicht verurteilt wurde, in der Mareotis aber nicht anwesend war, wo das belastende Material gegen ihn herkommt, wie es heißt. Ihr wißt aber, Geliebte, daß einseitiges Material keine Beweiskraft hat, sondern verdächtig erscheint.“

Westen eindeutig theologisch positioniert: Die Bischöfe um Julius erkennen die Theologie des aus dem Osten stammenden Markell als rechthgläubig an. Dies bedeutet nicht nur eine klare antiarianische Ausrichtung, sondern auch in Einzelfragen Kritik an Origenes, eine der zentralen theologischen Autoritäten des Ostens.²⁴

In der Zwischenzeit hatte sich auch der Osten theologisch festgelegt. In Antiochien versammeln sich anlässlich einer Kirchweihe, die wohl 341 stattfindet, die östlichen Bischöfe. Auch Kaiser Konstantius II. ist persönlich auf der Synode anwesend.²⁵ Mit der Synode stehen drei Glaubensbekenntnisse, die sogenannten drei antiochenischen Formeln, in direkter Verbindung. Auf der Grundlage der östlichen theologischen Tradition setzen sich die Glaubensformeln in sehr unterschiedlicher Intensität und Form mit dem Vorwurf des Arianismus auseinander, nähern sich dem Glauben von Nizäa an, betonen aber gleichzeitig die Ablehnung der als häretisch angesehenen Anschauungen des Markell.²⁶ Damit sind die grundlegenden theologischen Ausgangspositionen benannt, die wenig später in Serdika aufeinander prallen sollten.

Dass es überhaupt zum Projekt einer gemeinsamen Synode aus Ost und West kommen sollte, verdankt sich neben dem verständlichen Wunsch der beiden Exilanten Athanasius und Markell nach Rehabilitation dem Eingreifen der beiden Kaiser. Treibende Kraft ist dabei der westliche Augustus Konstans. Er ist bereits früh über die Angelegenheit unterrichtet und wird wohl im Frühjahr 341 auch über die Ergebnisse der römischen Bischofsversammlung informiert. Ohne Zögern unterstützt er das Vorhaben einer Reichssynode und wendet sich in diesem Sinne an seinen Bruder. Eine östliche Delegation, die das Vorhaben durch eine persönliche Intervention am Hof des Konstans in Trier verhindern will, scheitert kläglich. Schließlich stimmt Konstantius zu.²⁷ Zu Recht wird das Eigeninteresse des Konstantius am Zustandekommen der Synode hervorgehoben, sieht er doch hier eine Chance, über das Mittel der

24 Zur Haltung des Markell zu Origenes vgl. Seibt, *Theologie*, pp. 280–292.

25 Die sogenannte Kirchweihsynode ist nicht genau datierbar (zwischen dem 1. September 340 und dem 31. August 341). Es liegen keine Akten vor. Die Berichte sind gesammelt bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 41.2 (pp. 138–142).

26 Vgl. Ulrich, *Anfänge*, pp. 37f. Texte: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 41.3 (pp. 143f.: dritte Formel), Nr. 41.4 (pp. 144–148: zweite Formel), Nr. 41.5 (pp. 148–150: erste Formel). Siehe auch Richard Patrick Crosland Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 284–292.

27 Zu den Vorgängen vgl. Parvis, *Marcellus*, pp. 200–210 und Girardet, *Kaisergericht*, pp. 106–110.

Kirchenpolitik, d. h. durch die erneute Installation der in den Westen vertriebenen Bischöfe, Einfluss auf das östliche Reichsgebiet zu gewinnen.²⁸

Der Verlauf der Beratungen

Als Datum der in Serdika stattfindenden Bischofsversammlung wird in der Literatur sowohl das Jahr 342 als auch – in jüngeren Publikationen verstärkt – das Folgejahr 343 genannt. Zur Datierungsfrage wurde im Laufe der Jahrzehnte in der Forschung eine umfangreiche und kontroverse Debatte geführt.²⁹ Die meisten vorgetragenen Argumente sind ebenso wie die ihnen zugrunde liegenden Texte mehrdeutig. Nach den neueren chronographischen Arbeiten von Richard Burgess neigt sich aber die Waage eindeutig zugunsten des Jahres 343. In ihrer ausgewogenen, alle Argumente erneut prüfenden Synthese kann Sarah Parvis zeigen, dass die Synode von Serdika aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach im Jahr 343 stattgefunden hat.³⁰

Über den Gang der Beratungen sind wir gut unterrichtet. Eine ganze Reihe einschlägiger Dokumente, die über die lokalen Ereignisse und ihre theologische Bewertung berichten, sind überliefert. Dazu zählen die Rundbriefe und theologischen Erklärungen der beiden Synoden sowie verschiedene Briefe.³¹ Zusätzlich hat Athanasius einige Zeit nach der Synode die Ereignisse aus seiner Perspektive niedergeschrieben. Erstaunlicherweise sind die Dokumente der östlichen Synode in Serdika, etwa die sogenannte theologische Erklärung der östlichen Synode, in lateinischer Sprache überliefert, während umgekehrt viele Schreiben der westlichen Synode eine wesentlich bessere griechische Überlieferung aufweisen. Dieser erstaunliche Befund wurde von Angelika Wintjes philologisch untersucht. Demnach erscheint es als wahrscheinlich, dass die Texte der östlichen Synode im Original griechisch abgefasst wurden. Ebenso lagen die Haupttexte der westlichen Synode zunächst in lateinischer Sprache vor, wurden aber wohl noch auf der Synode ins Griechische übersetzt. Auch sind mehrfache Übersetzungsprozesse einzelner Dokumente nicht aus-

28 So Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 39. Girardet spricht sogar von „einer politischen ... Erpressung“ (ders., *Kaisergericht*, p. 110) des Konstantius durch seinen Bruder.

29 Wichtige Beiträge sind für 342: Ulrich, *Anfänge*, pp. 39–44 sowie für 343: Barnard, *Council*, pp. 46–55.

30 Vgl. mit ausführlicher Forschungsgeschichte und reichen Belegen: Parvis, *Marcellus*, pp. 210–217. Kurze Zusammenstellung der wichtigsten Argumente für 343 auch bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, pp. 179f.

31 Die Texte sind gesammelt, übersetzt und kommentiert bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 43–43.13 (pp. 179–279). Ausführlich auch Barnard, *Council*, pp. 78–96.

zuschließen.³² Einen Sonderfall bilden die Kanones von Serdika, die auf die westliche Synode zurückgehen und sich ausschließlich mit Fragen des Bischofsamtes beschäftigen.³³

Das zukünftige Konzil soll drei Themenfelder behandeln, die von der westlichen Seite vorgegeben werden.³⁴ Sie werden im Brief der westlichen Synode an den römischen Bischof Julius konkret benannt: zunächst die Glaubensfrage, dann, eng mit dieser verbunden, die Klärung der Rechtmäßigkeit der im Osten vorgenommenen Bischofsabsetzungen und schließlich weitere kirchenrechtliche Angelegenheiten.³⁵

Die westliche Delegation trifft als Erste in Serdika ein.³⁶ Konsequenterweise der auf der römischen Synode beschlossenen Linie folgend, nehmen die Westler Athanasius und Markell sogleich in ihre Gemeinschaft auf und feiern mit ihnen Eucharistie. Die später eintreffenden östlichen Bischöfe müssen erkennen, dass die westliche Seite bereits vollendete Tatsachen geschaffen hat. Sie fordern als Voraussetzung für die Aufnahme der gemeinsamen Konzilsdebatten, dass die Westler zuvor die Verbannten aus ihrer Gemeinschaft und damit von den folgenden Verhandlungen ausschließen müssten, um so zunächst die östlichen Synodalbeschlüsse anzuerkennen. Als dies nicht geschieht, verweigern sie weitere Verhandlungen und ziehen sich in ihr Hauptquartier, den kaiserlichen Palast in Serdika, zu weiteren Beratungen zurück. "Die Synode von Serdika war damit in zwei Teilsynoden gespalten, ehe sie überhaupt begonnen hatte."³⁷

32 Vgl. Angelika Wintjes, "Die ursprachliche Fassung der Dokumente von Serdica," in *Von Arius zum Athanasianum. Studien zur Edition der <<Athanasius Werke>>*, ed. Annette von Stockhausen und Christof Brennecke, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 164 (Berlin-New York 2010), pp. 127f.

33 Zu den Kanones und den mit ihnen verbundenen Problemen vgl. Heinz Ohme, "The Synod of Serdica (342)," in *The History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law to 1500*, eds. Wilfried Hartmann, Kenneth Pennington, History of medieval canon law 4 (Washington, D.C., 2012), pp. 66–74. Siehe auch Barnard, *Council*, pp. 97–118.

34 Vgl. Parvis, *Marcellus*, p. 229.

35 Vgl. Brief der westlichen Synode an Julius: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 43.5, 4 (pp. 225f.).

36 Die Ereignisse sind mehrfach dargestellt. Vgl. den Überblick bei Ulrich, *Anfänge*, pp. 44–47. Ausführlicher bei Hanns Christof Brennecke, *Hilarius von Poitiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantin II. Untersuchungen zur dritten Phase des Arianischen Streites (337–361)*, Patristische Texte und Studien 26 (Berlin, 1984), pp. 29–46.

37 Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 45. Die westlichen Bischöfe nehmen in Serdika an verschiedenen Orten Unterkunft. Vgl. Parvis, *Marcellus*, p. 234. Ihre Tagungen finden wohl in einem Gebäude nahe der Georgs-Rotunde statt. Ausführlich dazu: L.W. Barnard, "The Council of Serdica – Two Questions Reconsidered," in *Ancient Bulgaria. Papers Presented to the Inter-*

Wohl fehlt es von beiden Seiten nicht an Versuchen, einen Kompromiss zu finden, der die erneute Aufnahme der gemeinsamen Debatten ermöglicht hätte. So wird vorgeschlagen, dass eine paritätisch besetzte Bischofskommission nach Ägypten entsandt werden soll, um vor Ort die Richtigkeit der Anschuldigungen gegen Athanasius zu überprüfen.³⁸ Dies wird aber von westlicher Seite strikt abgelehnt. Auch beklagen die Orientalen, dass die Stimmung in der Stadt Serdika ihnen gegenüber zunehmend feindseliger wird und die Gefahr von Unruhen bestehe.³⁹ Doch auch von westlicher Seite scheint es Kompromissangebote gegeben zu haben. Zumindest berichtet der greise Bischof Ossius von Cordoba, einer der Anführer der westlichen Bischöfe in Serdika, davon in seinem Brief an Kaiser Konstantius, den Athanasius überliefert.⁴⁰ Mehrfach habe er dessen Ankläger aufgefordert, ihre Anschuldigungen erneut vorzubringen, sei es vor dem versammelten Konzil oder aber vor ihm allein. Werde Athanasius für schuldig befunden, so solle er aus der kirchlichen Gemeinschaft ausgestoßen werden. Andernfalls ist Ossius bereit, ihn mit sich nach Spanien zu nehmen. Die östliche Seite lehnt ab.⁴¹ Damit ist der Plan einer Reichssynode, die die kirchliche Einheit wiederherstellen sollte, endgültig gescheitert.

Schließlich teilt Eustathius, ein lokaler Presbyter und enger Mitarbeiter des Ortsbischofs Protogenes, den westlichen Bischöfen den Beschluss ihrer östlichen Amtsbrüder mit, Serdika zu verlassen. Bevor die Bischöfe aber die Stadt verlassen und sich auf die Heimreise bewegen, haben sie noch vor Ort im kaiserlichen Palatium einige wichtige Entscheidungen getroffen, die berechtigen, auch von einem „Eastern council of Serdica“⁴² zu sprechen. Ein ausführlicher Synodalbrief rekapituliert den Konflikt um Athanasius und Markell und beschreibt die Vorgänge in Serdika bis hin zur Abreise der Orientalen.⁴³ Im Paragraphen 28 des Schreibens werden die führenden Bischöfe der Gegenseite, allen voran der römische Bischof Julius („principem et ducem malorum“⁴⁴) exkommuniziert. Angehängt sind dem Schreiben die theologische Erklärung

national Symposium on the Ancient History and Archaeology of Bulgaria, University of Nottingham, 1981, ed. Andrew Poulter (Nottingham, 1983), pp. 215–220.

38 Vgl. den Rundbrief der östlichen Synode bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 43.11,19 (p. 263).

39 Vgl. Parvis, *Marcellus*, p. 233.

40 Vgl. Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum* 44.2f.

41 Ulrich hält den Vorschlag des Ossius für ein Täuschungsmanöver. Vgl. Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 46 Anm. 146. Ähnlich skeptisch ist Barnard, *Council*, p. 67f.

42 Ebd. 68.

43 Text: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 43.11 (250–272).

44 Ebd. Nr. 43.11, 28 (270, 31).

der östlichen Synode sowie eine Unterschriftenliste.⁴⁵ Die Westler hielten sich nach der Abreise der Orientalen wohl noch eine Zeit in Serdika auf. Sie verfassten ebenfalls einen Synodalbrief sowie weitere Schriftstücke, bevor auch sie die Heimreise antreten. „Wohl noch vor dem Wintereinbruch“⁴⁶ wird die Zusammenkunft beendet.

Ein kurzes Wort zum theologischen Inhalt der von den westlichen Bischöfen in Serdika beschlossenen Glaubenserklärung, dem sogenannten *Serdicense*:⁴⁷ Das Symbolum betont die eine Hypostase des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes, um so Christus gegen arianische Verkürzungen als wahren Gott zu sichern. Abgelehnt und als Irrelehre verworfen wird deshalb die von Origenes begründete und von den Eusebianern vertretene Vorstellung von drei Hypostasen.⁴⁸ Der mittlerweile von der Mehrheit der Forscher in seiner Authentizität nicht mehr angezweifelte Text besitzt zahlreiche Übereinstimmungen mit der theologischen Position des Markell von Ankyra, so dass Jörg Ulrich feststellen kann: „Das westliche *Serdicense* ist demnach dogmengeschichtlich als eine in allen wesentlichen Punkten mit der Lehre Markells übereinstimmende theologische Erklärung einzustufen.“⁴⁹

Die Ursachen der Spaltung

Um den Ursachen für die in Serdika gescheiterten Beratungen und das dadurch verursachte Schisma auf die Spur zu kommen, sind drei Fragenkomplexe zu untersuchen: 1.) Die Zusammensetzung der jeweiligen Bischofsgruppen. Auf den ersten Blick erscheint es so, als ob sich in Serdika geschlossene Blöcke aus den beiden Reichsteilen gegenüberstehen, es sich also um einen Konflikt handelt, der gleichzeitig eine klare geographische und theologische Trennlinie zwischen Ost und West abbildet. 2.) Die Rolle des römischen Bischofs Julius. 3.) Das Verhalten der beiden Kaiser Konstans und Konstantius II. und seine Bedeutung für den Verlauf der Beratungen.

Zunächst ist die Zusammensetzung der in Serdika anwesenden Bischöfe genauer zu erheben. Durch die Subskriptionslisten sind wir gut über die

45 Text der theologischen Erklärung: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 43.12 (pp. 272–275). Die Unterschriftenliste: ebd. 43.13 (pp. 275–279).

46 Vgl. Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 46.

47 Text: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 43.2 (pp. 205–212). Ausführliche Analyse bei Ulrich, *Anfänge*, pp. 47–87.

48 Vgl. ebd. 67f.

49 Ebd. 90. Ausführliche Analyse der Übereinstimmungen: ebd. 87–91. Zur Authentizität des Textes vgl. ebd. 98–106.

Anwesenden informiert. Athanasius berichtet, dass die Gesamtzahl der Teilnehmer beider Synoden 170 betrug. Dabei dürften an der westlichen Teilsynode zwischen 90 und 97 Bischöfe, an der östlichen nach deren eigenen Angaben 80 Bischöfe, von denen 73 mit Namen bekannt sind, teilgenommen haben.⁵⁰ Keiner der beiden Kaiser ist in Serdika anwesend.⁵¹ Rund ein Drittel der westlichen Bischöfe stammt aus Griechenland und den benachbarten Balkangebieten – Provinz Achaia 13, Macedonia 9, Creta 5 und Thessalia 4 –, während der eigentliche Westen (Spanien, Gallien, Italien, Afrika) nur sehr schwach vertreten ist. Die Verteilung der östlichen Bischöfe auf die jeweiligen Provinzen ist demgegenüber deutlich ausgeglichener.⁵² Aus den Namenslisten folgert Ulrich für die westliche Synode, dass „gut über 50 Teilnehmer der Synode und damit etwa 60% der Anwesenden von Hause aus griechisch sprachen,“ eine Beobachtung, die durch die Überlieferung der Synodaldokumente gestützt wird.⁵³ Bedeutende Vertreter der östlichen Partei sind unter anderem die Bischöfe Stephan von Antiochien, Akakios von Caesarea und Menophantes von Ephesus, während aus der westlichen Gruppe der greise Osius von Cordoba – geradezu die Inkarnation des nizänischen Glaubens –, der Ortsbischof Protopogenes sowie Maximin von Trier besonders hervorstechen.⁵⁴ Jedenfalls darf man sich die beiden Bischofsgruppen nicht als geschlossene Gruppen vorstellen.⁵⁵

Es bleibt festzuhalten, dass die sogenannte westliche Synode mehrheitlich von Bischöfen besetzt ist, die aus griechischsprachigen Gebieten des Imperiums stammen. Sie verhandeln eine dogmatische Frage, die als Folge der lange schwelenden arianischen Streitigkeiten ebenfalls ihren Ursprung im Osten hat und deren Hauptprotagonisten östliche Theologen sind. Besonders hervorzuheben ist, dass die von der westlichen Gruppe in Serdika im Symbolum, dem Serdicense, vertretene trinitätstheologische Position jene des Markell von Ankyra ist, also ebenfalls eines Theologen aus der östlichen Reichshälfte. Aus diesem Grund sind die zuweilen anzutreffenden Postulate eines sogenannten westlichen Bekenntnisses in Serdika nur als Unterscheidungsbegriffe zu der

50 Vgl. Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum* 15.3. Vgl. zu den Teilnehmern: Ulrich, *Anfänge*, pp. 91–96. Ausführliche Listen, auch aufgeschlüsselt nach Provinzen bei Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, pp. 180–184, Nützlich ist die beigegebene Karte, die die Bischofssitze der Teilnehmer verzeichnet: ebd. 185.

51 Vgl. ebd. 180.

52 Vgl. ebd. 184.

53 Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 95. Allerdings ist mit Wintjes (dies., *Fassung*, pp. 107–116) von einem lateinischen Prätext des Serdicense auszugehen.

54 Vgl. Barnard, *Council*, pp. 56–62.

55 Vgl. für die östliche Seite: Parvis, *Marcellus*, p. 232f.

östlich-origenistisch geprägten lokalen Teilsynode sinnvoll. Ähnliches gilt auch für den in diesem Beitrag mehrfach verwendeten Begriff westliche Synode.⁵⁶

Eine Schlüsselrolle bei der Bewertung der Vorgänge in Serdika kommt dem römischen Bischof Julius (Amtszeit 337–352) zu.⁵⁷ Ausgehend von den zeitgenössischen Bewertungen der östlichen Partei erscheint er in der Literatur als besonders belastet. Der römische Bischof selbst ist in Serdika nicht anwesend, die römische Position vertreten dort die beiden Presbyter Archidamus und Philoxenus sowie der Diakon Leo. Mit der athanasianischen Frage ist Julius bereits seit den Jahren 338 befasst, als Gesandtschaften sowohl aus Antiochien und später aus Alexandrien in Rom eintreffen, um, gestützt auf einschlägige Dokumente, darzulegen, weshalb Athanasius aus der kirchlichen Gemeinschaft auszuschließen sei oder nicht. Die Gegner des Athanasius scheitern. In diesem Zusammenhang taucht auch erstmals der Gedanke einer Synode zur Lösung der Streitigkeiten auf.⁵⁸ Verwickelt wird Julius in den Konflikt durch die Initiative des Athanasius und des Markell, die die Unterstützung des römischen Bischofs für ihre Sache suchen. Mit der Einberufung der römischen Synode 341 tritt eine entscheidende Wende ein: Neben die theologischen Konflikte tritt nun die Frage, ob Julius berechtigt ist, sich zum Richter über östliche Synodalentscheidungen zu machen und die Konfliktparteien vor seine römische Synode zu zitieren.⁵⁹ Hier tritt bei Julius offen ein primatiales Bewusstsein zu Tage. Der römische Bischof sieht wohl, ähnlich seinem Vorgänger in der kurz zuvor maßgeblich durch Rom entschiedenen Donatistenfrage, erneut die Chance, Ansehen und Bedeutung seines Stuhles zu steigern. Es gilt aber bei aller Kritik die Ausgangslage zu beachten: „der römische Bischof greift nicht zuerst aus eigener Initiative in die entstandenen Probleme ein. Vielmehr wendet man sich aus Ost und West an den römischen Stuhl, weil man von dort

56 Vgl. Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 96. Ulrich erinnert an die Warnung von Martin Tetz (zitiert ebd. 26 Anm. 1): „Man weiß, daß sich nicht einfach Osten und Westen, nicht Morgen- und Abendländer oder Griechen und Lateiner, auch nicht Origenisten und Antiorigenisten schieben.“

57 Zur Person vgl. Manlio Simonetti, „Giulio I, santo,“ in *Enciclopedia dei papi. Volume 1* (Rome, 2000), pp. 334–340. Siehe auch Wilhelm Gessel, „Das primatiale Bewusstsein Julius' I. im Lichte der Interaktionen zwischen der Cathedra Petri und den zeitgenössischen Synoden,“ in *Konzil und Papst. Historische Beiträge zur Frage der Höchsten Gewalt in der Kirche. Festgabe für Herman Tüchle*, ed. Georg Schwaiger (München, 1975), pp. 63–74.

58 Vgl. Girardet, *Kaisergericht*, p. 80f. Julius wird von den Parteien nicht als Richter angerufen; von einer möglichen Synode in Rom ist keine Rede.

59 Vgl. ebd. 84–87.

eine kompetente Lösung der bestehenden Schwierigkeiten erwartete. ... Entscheidend ist, dass man durch den Rekurs nach Rom grundsätzlich eine höhere Autorität anrief und somit diese im Prinzip anerkannte.⁶⁰ Julius wehrt sich gegen die Vorwürfe, indem er seine Fürsorge für die Einheit der Kirche und den rechten Glauben betont und auf den besonderen Rang der römischen Gemeinde verweist.⁶¹ Der Osten erkennt im Vorgehen des Julius aber eine unkanonische Neuerung und einen schwerwiegenden Eingriff in die grundsätzliche Gleichrangigkeit der Bischöfe. An den komplexen theologischen Debatten beteiligt sich Julius nicht. Durch die westliche Synode in Serdika erfolgt auch in kirchenrechtlicher Hinsicht eine Rangerhöhung des römischen Bischofs. Insbesondere durch Kanon 3, der Rom als Appellationsinstanz gegen die Entscheidung von Provinzialsynoden zulässt, werden die vorausgegangenen Aktionen Roms faktisch sanktioniert.⁶²

Eine zentrale Rolle für die Vorgänge in Serdika spielt die politische Lage des unter zwei Kaisern aufgeteilten Reiches. Seit der Mission des comes Gabianus, der eine westliche Bischofsdelegation nach Antiochien im Jahr 341 begleitet, wo sie von den dort versammelten Amtskollegen die Wiedereinsetzung des Athanasius fordert, ist der westliche Kaiser Konstans aktiv in die Auseinandersetzungen eingebunden. Sein Ziel ist es, „den Rückhalt seines Bruders bei der Kirche zu schwächen.“⁶³ Das politisch durchdachte, selbstsichere Auftreten und Agieren des Athanasius ist ohne die kaiserliche Rückendeckung nicht vorstellbar. Der Konflikt um Athanasius verwandelt die Machtfrage, d. h. das Ringen der beiden Herrscher um die Dominanz im Gesamtreich, in eine Glaubensfrage. Konstantius II. wird dabei zu Unrecht zum Parteigänger der Arianer gestempelt, seine theologischen Überzeugungen bewusst von westlicher Seite

60 Gessel, *Bewusstsein*, p. 69.

61 Vgl. das (Verteidigungs-)Schreiben des Julius an die Synode von Antiochien. Text: Brennecke, *Athanasius Werke*, Nr. 41.8 (pp. 156–174). Dazu pointiert: Girardet, *Kaisergericht*, pp. 86f., 88–95.

62 Nach Girardet ist die Neuerung des Julius nicht die Überordnung seiner Synode über eine andere, sondern die Möglichkeit einer *supplicatio*, die sich nicht an eine Bischofssynode, sondern an einen einzigen Bischof, jenen von Rom, richtet. Vgl. Klaus Maria Girardet, „Appellatio. Ein Kapitel kirchlicher Rechtsgeschichte in den Kanones des vierten Jahrhunderts,“ *Historia* 23 (1974), 98–127. Zustimmung Brennecke, *Hilarius*, p. 44f. Zur Echtheitsfrage der Kanones vgl. Hamilton Hess, *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2002).

63 Richard Klein, *Constantius II. und die christliche Kirche*, Impulse der Forschung 26 (Darmstadt, 1977), p. 45.

verzeichnet.⁶⁴ In dieser Perspektive erscheint Serdika als die Versammlung von zwei konkurrierenden Parteisynoden, deren eine die politische Unterstützung des östlichen Kaisers Konstantius II., die andere jene seines westlichen Pendants Konstans besitzt.⁶⁵

Allerdings bildet sich die administrative Gliederung des Reiches in Ost und West nicht immer vollständig im Verhalten der Bischöfe in Serdika ab. So nimmt Bassus, der Bischof des thrakischen Diocletianopolis, an den Beratungen der westlichen Synode teil, während die aus derselben Provinz stammenden Amtskollegen Euticius von Philippopolis und Demophilus von Beroea zur östlichen Gruppe gehören. Wohl bestimmten kirchenpolitische Motive diese Wahl, konnte Bassus doch so den Eigenstand seines alten und einstmals bedeutenden Bischofssitzes gegenüber den Kollegen herausstellen.⁶⁶ Auch treten persönliche Animositäten zuweilen hinter die theologische Generallinie zurück. Bischof Dionysius von Elis, Vorsteher einer Stadt in Achaia, ist Teil der westlichen Bischofsgruppe. Zu dieser gehören aber auch jene Amtskollegen, die ihn zuvor aus der kirchlichen Gemeinschaft ausgeschlossen hatten.⁶⁷ Auf der anderen Seite stehen eigene theologische Anschauungen hinter dem Primat der Politik zurück. Ein Beispiel für diese Haltung scheint Bischof Protogenes von Serdika zu sein, der neben Ossius von Cordoba eine der wichtigsten Persönlichkeiten der westlichen Synode ist.⁶⁸ Zu Zeiten der Alleinherrschaft des Kaisers Konstantin ist er im Jahr 336 Teilnehmer einer Synode in Konstantinopel, die die Theologie des Markell von Ancyra verurteilt. Nach der Reichsteilung 337 befindet sich sein Bischofssitz aber im Reichsteil des Konstans, was die Tendenz zur Unterstützung der westlichen Position sicherlich verstärkt haben dürfte.⁶⁹ Der Einfluss der Politik ist jedenfalls bei allen theologischen Ereignissen im Umfeld des Konzils von Serdika wahrzunehmen.

64 Vgl. ebd. pp. 46–51 zur Dominanz der Macht – über die Glaubensfrage bei Athanasius siehe ebd. p. 51 Anm. 114.

65 Vgl. Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 107.

66 So Barnard, *Council*, p. 58f. In den Unterschriftslisten wird Diocletianopolis wohl irrtümlich als Bischofssitz der Macedonia zugeordnet.

67 Vgl. Turhan Kaçar, "The Parting of the Ways: The East and the West at the Council of Serdica A.D. 343," *Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19.1 (2002), 139–151, hier 144; Timothy David Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), p. 74.

68 Vgl. Stanislava Stoycheva, "Bishop Protogenes of Serdica. His life and theological views (335–351)," *Byzantinoslavica* 60 (1999), 308–314.

69 So Kaçar, *Parting*, p. 145: „Only a political explanation may be offered for the attitude of Protegenes.“

Schlussfolgerung

Das Projekt eines in Serdika zu veranstaltenden Reichskonzils verdankt seine Grundlage verschiedenen Motiven. Im Mittelpunkt der theologischen Auseinandersetzungen steht die Frage nach der Rechtgläubigkeit des Athanasius von Alexandrien und des Markell von Ancyra. Die Bischöfe des östlichen Reichsteils lehnen in ihrer Mehrheit auf der Grundlage der origenistisch-eusebianischen Dreihypostasenlehre die Lehren des Markell ab und fordern die Anerkennung der in Tyrus 335 erfolgten Absetzung des Athanasius. Der durch den römischen Bischof Julius auf starkes Drängen des Athanasius beschrittene Weg einer Revision der östlichen Synodalbeschlüsse führt schließlich in Verbindung mit dem Wunsch des Kaiser Konstans, auch auf den Osten des Reiches auszugreifen, zum Plan eines ökumenischen Reichskonzils am Schnittpunkt der beiden Reichsteile in Serdika. Hier kommt es aus theologischer Perspektive nur vordergründig zur Konfrontation von Ost und West, stammt doch nur eine Minderheit der in Serdika anwesenden sogenannten westlichen Bischöfe tatsächlich aus dem lateinisch sprechenden Westteil des Reiches. Die theologische Debatte wird zudem von Athanasius und Markell, zwei Exilanten aus dem Osten, bestimmt.

Der Plan des Reichskonzils scheitert fast zwangsläufig. Jede der Bischofsgruppen, Ost und West, tagt separat und exkommuniziert die Gegenseite. Serdika ist kein Konzil, sondern wahrlich ein Debakel.⁷⁰ Die Folgen für die Einheit der Reichskirche sind weitreichend: Wohl kommt es bereits kurze Zeit später zu Vermittlungsversuchen und die Alleinherrschaft des Konstantius ab dem Jahr 350 verändert erneut die politische Großwetterlage, dennoch hat der in Serdika angerichtete Schaden langfristige Folgen. Erstmals in der Kirchengeschichte haben sich, wenn auch durch Exilanten aus dem Osten verursacht, die Ortsgemeinden in Ost und West durch offizielle Beschlüsse voneinander getrennt, wobei die Differenzen „machtpolitischer (Konkurrenz der beiden Kaiser), kirchenpolitischer und kirchenrechtlicher (Frage der Berechtigung der Revision und ggf. Aufhebung von östlichen Synodalurteilen durch westliche Synoden) und dogmatischer Natur waren (Arianismus-Vorwurf gegen die Orientalen; Unannehmbarkeit der Theologie Markells aus Sicht der östlichen, der Tradition des Origenes verpflichteten Bischöfe)“.⁷¹ In Serdika konnten sich

70 Vgl. Hanson, *Search*, p. 295: „The Council of Serdica never met as a Council. It was in fact a débacle rather than a Council, and it is absurd to reckon it among the General Councils, whether we look at it from the point of view of the Western or that of the Eastern bishops.“

71 Ulrich, *Anfänge*, p. 46f.

Ost und West in einer zentralen Frage des Glaubens nicht einigen, die kirchliche Einheit des Reiches war ebenso brüchig geworden wie die politische, die Entfremdung zwischen den Reichsteilen wird auch im Episkopat der Reichskirche für alle sichtbar. In diesem Sinne sind die Ereignisse in Serdika eine bedeutsame Zäsur in der Kirchengeschichte des vierten Jahrhunderts.⁷²

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The *divisio regni* of 364: The End of Unity?¹

Jan Willem Drijvers

Introduction

Since the seventeenth century the year 395 has been considered a canonical marker of the final division between east and west and the end of unity of the Roman Empire. In 1951 Émilienne Demougeot in her study *De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain* emphasized again 395 as an important turning-point and the parting of the ways between east and west.² Since then most textbooks refer to 395 as the year of the definitive partition of the empire in an eastern and western half. In a recent publication we read the following:

“In the year AD 395 ... the Roman empire was effectively divided for administrative purposes into two halves, which ... began to respond in significantly different ways. AD 395 was therefore a real turning point in the eventual split between east and west ... Until then the late Roman empire had been a unity ...”³

Unity is a complex concept, rather an abstract idea than a factual circumstance. The question can be raised whether the Roman Empire ever constituted a unity. Nevertheless, historians of antiquity do not hesitate to present the empire created by Augustus as a unified state, in spite of the fact that it consisted of a diversified amalgam of peoples and cultures. As argued by Hervé Inglebert in the introductory paper of this volume, the unity of the late Roman Empire can be studied from a cultural (and religious) point of view, from a military standpoint as well as from a political and administrative perspective.

1 I like to thank Meaghan McEvoy and Hans Teitler for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 É. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain 395–410. Essai sur le gouvernement impérial* (Paris, 1951).

3 Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity AD 395–700* (London/New York, 2012, 2nd rev. ed.), p. 1. See e.g. also R.C. Blockley, “The Dynasty of Theodosius” Av. Cameron, P. Garnsey (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History XII, The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 113. A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike. Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284–565 n.Chr.*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 3.6 (Munich, 2007²), p. 590. David S. Potter ends his *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180–395* (London/New York, 2014²) in 395.

In this contribution the concept of unity will primarily be approached from an administrative and political viewpoint.

In the first two centuries of our era the Mediterranean world was more unified than it had ever been or has ever been since.⁴ The might of Rome was able to control a world empire from Hadrian's Wall to the Euphrates. The political unity and order of this global empire depended on the administrative and military control from the center, i.e. the city of Rome and the imperial court, over the conquered territories as well as on the acceptance of Roman supremacy and the willingness to cooperate with Rome by subject peoples, provincials and city elites. Rome encouraged the sense of belonging – an important ingredient for the political unity – by incorporating newcomers. The granting of Roman citizenship and career opportunities to outsiders greatly stimulated the unification of the empire.⁵ Unity was also encouraged by Rome's policy of adapting to and adopting of cultural and religious traditions of conquered nations and incorporating them into their own system.⁶ Unity was furthermore promoted by economic interaction, the use of Latin as the official administrative language, a universal legal system, and by a highly developed network of roads. The sharing of a common *paideia* created cultural homogeneity among the members of the empire's elites. Unity and uniformity is, for instance, reflected by cities in the empire which shared a similar urban outlay with fora/agorai, bathhouses, gymnasia, theaters, amphitheaters and sanctuaries, as well as similar governmental systems. Nevertheless, ethnically, culturally, linguistically and religiously the Roman Empire continued to be highly diversified. Moreover, throughout the history of the empire there existed a cultural divide between the Greek east and the Latin west.

The emperor was effectively the embodiment of the empire.⁷ He symbolized more than anything else the unity of this culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse state. In him the various traditions and peoples of the empire were ideologically joined. His presence in the form of images throughout the empire, his veneration by his subjects in the form of the

4 On the unity of the Roman Empire in the first and second century CE, see e.g. M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem. The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London, 2007), Ch. 2 'One World under Rome' (pp. 68–121).

5 On this see e.g. Greg Woolf, *Rome. An Empire's Story* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 218–230 and the literature mentioned there. On the globalizing of Roman culture and its complexities see R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture. Unity, Diversity and Empire* (London 2005).

6 See for the highly complex process of 'romanization', A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, 2008), esp. Chapter 1 "Culture, Identity and Power" (pp. 3–37).

7 Carlos F. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West. Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge, 2010), Introduction. Fergus B. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World, 31 B.C. – 337 A.D.* (London, 1992²).

imperial cult and oaths of allegiance, and his representation as the patron and father of all his subjects unified, to an extraordinary extent, the nations and cities that made up the Roman Empire.

In the third century this political unity disintegrated. There was a general loss of central control over political, administrative and military affairs. The person of the emperor as a source of stable and established power as well as a symbol of unity and concord lost some of his significance. In addition, the desire of provincial peoples to belong to Rome and to be part of the Roman Empire began to crumble as can be surmised from the separatist movements of Postumus (260–274) and Zenobia (270–272) and the waning interest of city elites to maintain responsibility for the affairs of their communities.⁸

After the turmoil of the third century and the resulting political and administrative disintegration, the restructuring of the empire by Diocletian (284–305) marked a new era in the history of Rome and a reestablishment of the empire by administrative and military reforms. Provinces became smaller and greater in number and new administrative layers were created by the formation of dioceses and prefectures. The military apparatus was enlarged considerably in order to protect the frontiers. Moreover, a *partitum imperium* was introduced by the tetrarchical system of two *Augusti* and two *Caesares* who were each responsible for a territorial part of the empire.⁹ Although Diocletian's tetrarchical system failed, the system of *Augusti* and *Caesares* continued to exist in the fourth century, often in the interest of dynasty building and smooth succession. For most of the fourth century the empire was ruled by more than one emperor who often had his own domain over which he ruled and for which he was administratively and militarily responsible; only sporadically would the empire be ruled by a single emperor.¹⁰ As in the third century, in the fourth century usurpations also took place,¹¹ accompanied by troubles

8 For overviews of the developments in the third century see e.g. Clifford Ando, *Imperial Rome AD 193 to 284. The Critical Century* (Edinburgh, 2012); David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180–395* (London/New York, 2014²), pp. 211–294; and of course the relevant chapters in *The Cambridge Ancient History XII: The Crisis of Empire, A.D. 193–337* (Cambridge, 2005).

9 For the reign and reforms of Diocletian, see e.g. R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh, 2004); Jill Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284 to 363. The New Empire* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 25–105; Demandt, *Die Spätantike*, pp. 57–75.

10 Constantine (324–337), Constantius (354–355), Julian (361–363), Jovian (363–364) and Theodosius (388–392, 394–395). Constantine and Theodosius nominated their sons (and other family members) as *Caesares* but the latter were only militarily and not administratively responsible for the territory assigned to them as long as their fathers were alive.

11 See now on late-antique usurpations J. Szidat, *Usurpator tanti nominis. Kaiser und Usurpator in der Spätantike (337–476 n.Chr.)*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 210 (Stuttgart, 2010).

on the frontiers and the opposition of city elites to the increased financial obligations imposed by the central government. Fourth-century emperors had to devote much of their time, energy and resources to maintaining the administrative, military and religious unity of empire. In addition, emperors seem to have gradually lost their status as a unifying symbol. It is, for instance, striking that from the beginning of the fifth century no imperial statues seem to have been set up in provincial cities.¹² This may be an indication that the Roman citizens could no longer identify themselves with their rulers or the empire they represented. In spite of all the administrative and military efforts by emperors to preserve the empire and to keep it unified, it gradually disintegrated and lost territory, in particular in the western part.

Let us go back to the year 395. Although almost universally accepted as the geo-political breakup between the east and west, this chronological marker of the end of unity has also occasionally been questioned. While it is hard to deny that politically, administratively, militarily and economically the two halves were growing apart in the fifth century, the idea of unity was still underscored and there was a continuing eastern concern and support for affairs in the west. The east sustained the west militarily, *Concordia Augustorum* was emphasized, unity of empire was still proclaimed on coinage and in imperial documents, laws issued by one of the two *Augusti* were valid in both halves of the empire, the consulship was shared by eastern and western emperors, and dynastic links were forged between the eastern and western courts.¹³

One may wonder whether contemporaries were aware that 395 was a decisive date in the parting of the ways between east and west, and thus of the end of unity of empire. The year 395 as marking the end of unity is a date established by scholars in retrospect and not necessarily experienced as such by the inhabitants of the empire. On the contrary, they most likely considered the *divisio regni* of 395 not as a permanent division and as a final step in the disintegration of the empire but rather as the splitting up of administrative and military responsibilities between two emperors (Honorius and Arcadius) in an attempt to preserve the empire as a unified state.¹⁴ After all, the sharing of

12 This information is derived from the Oxford database of "Last Statues in Antiquity"; <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>.

13 W.N. Bayless, *The Political Unity of the Roman Empire during the Disintegration of the West, A.D. 395–457*, PhD thesis Brown University 1972; Meaghan McEvoy, "Rome and the Transformation of the imperial office in the late fourth-mid-fifth centuries AD", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 78 (2010), pp. 151–192, at p. 176; Meaghan McEvoy, "Between the Old Rome and the New: Imperial Co-operation ca. 400–500 CE", D. Dzino, K. Parry (eds.), *Byzantium, its Neighbours, and its Cultures* (Sydney, 2014), pp. 245–267.

14 Fergus B. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire. Power and Belief under Theodosius II 408–450* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 3 argues convincingly that the crucial division of 395 had had come

administrative and military responsibilities between emperors had become common particularly since Diocletian but also before,¹⁵ and rarely had the empire been ruled by a single emperor since the end of the third century.

The Partition of Empire in 364

Remarkably enough, in contrast to the division of imperial rule in 395, the division of 364 has not received much attention or, for that matter, the implications of *divisio regni* before 395 in general.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the *divisio regni* of 364 is historically of importance because it was a far-reaching administrative and military partition of the empire in an eastern and western half and as such seems to have served as an example for the division of 395.

On 17 February 364 the emperor Jovian died without a successor after a rule of only some eight months. In Nicaea the principal civil and military leaders were looking for a new emperor, and several candidates were discussed, among them Equitius, Ianuarius (a relative of Jovian) and Salutius,¹⁷ when they unanimously chose Valentinian as new *Augustus*.¹⁸ After his arrival in Nicaea, Valentinian (who had to travel from Ancyra) was presented to the troops to be hailed as *Augustus* on 25 February. When Valentinian prepared to address the army, the soldiers began to protest: in a persistent and even aggressive way they demanded that a second, joint emperor should at once be named. The agents of the uproar were the whole army, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, our main source on Valentinian's nomination and the *divisio imperii*.¹⁹ However, this is not likely, and the prime instigators most likely must be looked for elsewhere. The generals, who as members of the *consistorium* had unanimously agreed upon Valentinian as emperor and apparently had not insisted on a partition of imperial power, cannot have been behind the incident. Nor were the candidates who were passed over for the throne responsible for the upheaval, as Ammianus reports.²⁰ The most likely alternative is that officers belonging to

about, it seems, as an accident and that it was not meant as a permanent parting of the ways between east and west; see also S. Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284–641* (Oxford, 2007), p. 91.

15 See the contribution of Hervé Inglebert in this volume.

16 An exception is the 'Doktorarbeit' of A. Pabst, *Divisio Regni. Der Zerfall des Imperium Romanum in der Sicht der Zeitgenossen* (Bonn, 1986).

17 *PLRE* 1, Flavius Equitius 2, Ianuarius 5, Secundus 3.

18 On Valentinian's election see J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus xxvi* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 20–22.

19 Amm. Marc. 26.1–2, 4–5.6.

20 Amm. Marc. 26.2.4.

the middle rank – the senior commanders who had authority over the lower ranks – instigated the uprising.²¹ Since the soldiers threatened to become violent and an emperor could not survive without the support of his armed forces, in his *adlocutio* Valentinian agreed to the need of a partner in rule, making it clear also that the choice for a co-emperor was to be his. Ammianus, who gives an account of Valentinian's inauguration ceremony, does not explain why the army wanted a second emperor alongside Valentinian. Joint emperorship was of course not new in Roman history, and even had become common practice in the fourth century. Moreover, the sharing of power could be rather successful as the military victories of Julian during his time as *Caesar* under Constantius II in Gaul in the 350s had proven, although it also contained the risk of civil war between an *Augustus* and his *Caesar*. Furthermore, within a period of eight months the empire had been confronted with the sudden death of two emperors – Julian and Jovian – who both had ruled solely and had not designated successors. Their deaths gave occasion to the potentially dangerous situation of electing a successor; the soldiers may have wanted to prevent a similar situation by demanding of Valentinian that he nominate a colleague so that if he would die suddenly the empire would still have a ruler.²² Moreover, the army at Nicaea consisted of forces from the west and the east; the former had stood under the command of Julian while the other had been commanded by Constantius. Both armies had been combined for the Persian expedition. However, returning to the empire from the disastrous expedition, it was inevitable that the forces would be divided again into a western and an eastern army, and that if no second emperor would be appointed one of the two would be without a commander of imperial status. This implied less prestige, but more importantly fewer privileges and financial benefits for the soldiers.

Valentinian was forced to promise that he would search for a suitable colleague.²³ We can only guess whom the soldiers had in mind as co-emperor, but probably not Valentinian's brother Valens. Whether Valentinian himself already thought of his brother as his co-emperor is not certain. Yet, shortly afterwards Valentinian resolved to make Valens his colleague.²⁴ During a meeting of the *consistorium* where the matter of his partner in rule was raised, the *magister equitum* Dagalaifus, who had guessed Valentinian's intention, remarked "If you love your relatives, most excellent emperor, you have a brother; if it is

21 I like to thank Kevin Feeney, PhD student at Yale University, for sharing with me his unpublished paper in which this idea is put forward.

22 Amm. Marc. 26.2.4; Zosimus 4.1.2; Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.6.8; Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.8. Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary* xxvi, pp. 46–47.

23 Amm. Marc. 26.2.9.

24 Cf. Zosimus 4.1.2 who remarks that Valentinian had considered other candidates before choosing his brother.

the state that you love, seek out another man to clothe with the purple".²⁵ Valentinian, angered by this advice, nevertheless chose Valens, who until then had had an undistinguished career.²⁶ On 2 March 364 the emperor appointed his brother *tribunus stabuli* and on 28 March (Palm Sunday) he was proclaimed *Augustus*;²⁷ he was adorned with the imperial insignia and a diadem at the Hebdomon in the suburbs of Constantinople.²⁸ Valentinian deviated from tradition by appointing Valens as *Augustus* and not as *Caesar*. According to Ammianus only Marcus Aurelius had before made his adopted brother Lucius Verus co-*Augustus*.²⁹ After the uprising of the army at Nicaea, Valentinian, undoubtedly in dialogue with the high military commanders and civil officials, conceived the plan to divide the empire into an eastern and a western half, each part to be ruled by emperors of equal power. Valentinian's choice of making his brother *Augustus* and giving him reign over part of the empire may have been inspired by Constantius' experiences with his cousins Gallus and Julian: he had made each *Caesar* and hence subordinate to himself. This had created considerable problems culminating in Gallus' execution in 354 and Julian's proclamation as *Augustus* by his troops in Paris in 360.³⁰

A few weeks after Valens' had been proclaimed emperor the two *Augusti* left Constantinople to travel to Naïssus and from there to Sirmium. In these cities the implementation of the momentous decision took place: the administrative and military division of the empire into a western and an eastern part. This has sometimes been considered the first "wirkliche Reichsteilung" between east and west.³¹ In the suburb Mediana, some three miles from Naïssus, where the

- 25 Amm. Marc. 26.4.1 "*Si tuos amas*", inquit, "*imperator optime, habes fratrem, si rem publicam, quaere quem vestigas*"; tr. Rolfe.
- 26 The only military post Valens seems to have had was that of *protector domesticus*. See Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary xxvi*, pp. 79–80; N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman state in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 51–53.
- 27 For the date see Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary xxvi*, p. 81.
- 28 This was the first time that an emperor was proclaimed at the Hebdomon which then became the standard site where Eastern and Byzantine emperors were proclaimed; e.g. G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974), pp. 87–88.
- 29 Amm. Marc. 27.6.16 *Verum adoptivum fratrem absque diminutione aliqua auctoritatis imperatoriae socium fecit*.
- 30 Amm. Marc. 14.11.23; 20.4.
- 31 Pabst, *Divisio Regni*, p. 82. For the division of the empire see Amm. Marc. 26.5.1–6, with commentary of Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary xxvi*, pp. 93–107. Ammianus (26.4.5–6) connects the division of power between the two brothers with the troubles the empire was experiencing from *excitatae gentes saevissimae*: Alamanni, Sarmatae, Picts, Saxons, Scots, Attacotti, Austoriani and other Moorish tribes, Goths and Persians were threatening the empire.

emperors had arrived (at least) by 2 June, they divided the army and its commanders between themselves. As said, to some extent this was a return to the situation of before 361 when Julian had combined the western and eastern armies for his Persian expedition. Julian's former troops and commanders were allocated to Valentinian while the troops and commanders of Constantius II were assigned to Valens.³² In Sirmium, where the two emperors are first attested on 5 July, the jurisdiction of the empire and the court officials were divided according to the wishes of Valentinian. Valens was given the Prefecture of the East while Valentinian gained control over the Prefectures of Italy (Italy, Africa, Illyricum) and Gaul (Brittany, Gaul and Spain).³³ Probably at the beginning of August Valentinian and Valens parted, the former for Milan and the latter for Constantinople, never to see each other again.

Considering that the splitting up of the empire into eastern and western zones, each with their own imperial court, administrative bureaucracy and armies, was a momentous decision,³⁴ the sources, in particular Ammianus and Zosimus, describe the *divisio regni* in remarkably few words and in a matter-of-fact way as if it was an undertaking of no great importance. This may be explained by the fact that the splitting of imperial power between emperors of equal status, at least formally, was not a novel development for fourth-century Romans. *Partitum imperium* goes back a long way and had become normal in the later Roman period.³⁵ A division of east and west had occurred in 286 when Diocletian made Maximian *Augustus* over the western part of the empire while

32 Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.8 notes that Valens ruled over the territory that previously had been held by Constantius II. For the division see also Zosimus 4.3.1. According to D. Hoffmann, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, 2. vols. (Bonn, 1969–1970), vol. 1, pp. 124–126 the division of the army into a western and an eastern part as found in the *Notitia Dignitatum* originated in 364. The units which went with Valentinian to the west were given the titles *Seniores*, and those which accompanied Valens to the east were called *Iuniores*; see also J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989), pp. 190–191; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, p. 33. However, the division between *Seniores* and *Iuniores* seems already to have taken place earlier; e.g. T. Drew-Bear, “A Fourth-Century Latin Soldier's Epitaph at Nakolea”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 81 (1977), pp. 257–274; M.J. Nicasie, *The Twilight of Empire. The Roman Army from the Reign of Diocletian until the Battle of Adrianople* (Amsterdam, 1998), pp. 25–31; Y. Le Bohec, “Die Kriege des Valentinian I. und des Valens (364–378)”, in: Y. Le Bohec, *Das römische Heer in der späten Kaiserzeit* (Stuttgart, 2010), pp. 229–242, at p. 230.

33 Amm. Marc. 26.5.1–4; Zosimus 4.3.1. Pabst, *Divisio Regni*, p. 83; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, pp. 26–27 with references to more primary sources.

34 W. Heering, *Kaiser Valentinian I (364–375 n. Chr.)* (Magdeburg, 1927) even remarks that “Diese Teilung des römischen Reiches war entscheidend” (p. 23) and that this was the first time that the empire was ‘wirklich geteilt’.

35 See the paper of Hervé Inglebert in this volume.

he himself ruled over the east. In 313 Constantine and Licinius shared power, the one ruling over the western part and the other over the eastern provinces. After Constantine's death in 337, his three sons all bearing the title of *Augustus*, divided the empire into three parts. Nevertheless, the division of the empire into an eastern and a western zone in 364 was an important moment in the history of Rome which brought closer the growing apart of the two halves of the empire and the final division between an eastern Greek Roman Empire and a western Latin Roman Empire.

Valentinian's Choice of the West

Valentinian's choice to rule over the western provinces while leaving the east to his brother is notable. He ruled over the prefectures of Gaul and Italy while Valens received the Oriens. This partition would essentially also be followed in 395 when the empire was divided between Honorius and Arcadius. There has been speculation about why Valentinian, as superior emperor (see below), chose the European, western part of the empire, and thereby gave preference to the west over the east, while the centre of gravity had been continually pushed eastwards since the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine. Ammianus and Zosimus, our main sources on the division, offer no explanation. Socrates Scholasticus is rather vague in speaking of the "problems there".³⁶ Symmachus is more specific in saying that the western region was in danger of collapse.³⁷ In his necrology of Valentinian Ammianus mentions that the emperor wanted to strengthen the strongholds and cities situated on the Rhine and Danube frontier because of the raids of Alamanni and other Germanic peoples.³⁸ This is sometimes taken as an explanation for Valentinian's choice of the west,³⁹ but the Ammianus passage is not without textual problems and it is questionable whether it can serve as an argument for explaining fully Valentinian's preference for the west. The sources are therefore not particularly clear as to why Valentinian chose to rule over the western part of the empire and they leave much room for speculation.⁴⁰ It could well be that Valentinian, who had ample

36 Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.2.1.

37 Symmachus, *Or.* 1.15 *sedem quodammodo in ea parte posuisti, qua totius rei publicae ruina vergebat*; *Or.* 1.16 *maximeque hoc in Gallias delegisti, quod hic non licet otari*. It should, however, be kept in mind that Symmachus gave this speech in 369, five years after the *divisio regni*.

38 Amm. Marc. 30.7.5.

39 E.g. M. Raimondi, *Valentiniano I e la scelta dell'Occidente* (Alessandria, 2001), p. 91.

40 Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary* xxvi, pp. 99–100.

military experience, in contrast to his brother,⁴¹ considered the problems in the west to be more serious than in the east. He must have regarded himself as better equipped to deal with the Alamannic problems at the Rhine frontier and with other peoples invading Roman territory. Such a belief suggests that Valentinian may have underestimated the Gothic threat on the Danube frontier which he left to the care of Valens, not to mention the Persians, who only a year before had inflicted severe losses in territory and manpower upon the Romans after Julian's failed expedition and would soon start to intervene in the affairs of Armenia.⁴²

Duae curae and concordia

Both brothers bore the title of *Augustus* and ruled *pari iure*. Symmachus, in his oration for Valentinian of 369, speaks about *duae curae*,⁴³ implying that the brothers shared the *cura rei publicae* on an equal basis.⁴⁴ However, Valentinian was evidently the *Augustus senior*. He was, apart from being the older brother, also Valens' *auctor imperii*, the one who had bestowed imperial authority upon Valens.⁴⁵ In inscriptions and imperial edicts Valentinian is always mentioned first.⁴⁶ The division of the empire left Valentinian territorially in the dominant position since he ruled over two-thirds of the empire. Ammianus in particular emphasizes Valens' inferiority and obedient demeanour towards his elder

41 Den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary xxvi*, pp. 21–22.

42 Jovian had agreed to a peace treaty which implied that five *regiones Transtigritanae* and a considerable number of strongholds, including Nisibis, were to be handed over to the Persians; 25.7.9. For the treaty see e.g. R.C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds, 1992), pp. 27–30. For the conflict over Armenia under Valens' reign, see Amm. Marc. 27.12, 29.1.1–4, 30.1–2. Ian Hughes, *Imperial Brothers. Valentinian, Valens and the Disaster at Adrianople* (Barnsley, 2013), pp. 25–27 has the unlikely suggestion that Valentinian chose for the west because if he had taken control of the prefecture of the Orient he would be expected to emulate Julian's campaign against Persia to negate to treaty of 363. Failure to do so would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Improbable is also Hughes' argument that Valentinian's presence in the east would have been considered by Shapur as an act of aggression.

43 Symmachus, *Or.* 1.14: *in duas curas dividis orbis excubias*.

44 See for an elaborate exposition on the use of *cura* in the context of Symmachus' oration, Pabst, *Divisio Regni*, pp. 83–85.

45 Symmachus, *Or.* 1.11; Themistius, *Or.* 6.74a, 76b. The title of Themistius' oration is "Beloved Brothers, or, On Brotherly Love". See also Raimondi, *Valentiniano I*, p. 87; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, pp. 28–30.

46 E.g. *ILS* 771.

brother. The relationship between the two emperors was, in all but name, that of an *Augustus* and his *Caesar*.⁴⁷ Ammianus calls Valens an obedient servant (*apparitor morigerus*) and remarks that he was only added (*adiunctus*) to Valentinian. Valentinian was the more powerful (*potior*) and Valens consulted him and was guided by his older brother's will.⁴⁸

In spite of the division of the empire and the evident superiority of Valentinian, there is rhetorically a great emphasis on unity and *concordia* in contemporary writings. In his speech to the army, before he had appointed Valens as co-emperor, Valentinian declared that his first concern was the preservation of *concordia*.⁴⁹ The ideological harmony between the two brothers is expressed by Ammianus in the term *concordissimi principes*,⁵⁰ while almost the same expression – *concordissimi victores* – is used in an inscription to commemorate the construction of a military camp near the Danube by both emperors.⁵¹ According to Themistius the emperors “are both perfect and form a complete pair as if it was one person”.⁵² Symmachus, using a cosmic metaphor, remarks that if sun and moon shared power in the same way as Valentinian and Valens they would both rise in the same circuit.⁵³ According to the official ideology, therefore, the brothers ruled in perfect harmony and complete parity. Their *concordia* is also expressed on coins issued from all mints in the empire; they bear the images of both brothers with equal representations of their status.⁵⁴ Constitutions are issued in the names of both emperors mentioned in order of seniority. In public inscriptions victory titles are shared by both *Augusti*.⁵⁵

47 Pabst, *Divisio Regni*, p. 86.

48 Amm. Marc. 26.4.3 *participem quidem legitimum potestatis, sed in modum apparitoris morigerum*; 26.5.1 *honore specie tenus adiunctus*; 26.5.4 *Et post haec cum ambo fratres Sirmium introissent, diviso palatio, ut potiori placuerat...*; 27.4.1 *Valens enim, ut consulto placuerat fratri, cuius regebatur arbitrio, arma concussit in Gothos*.

49 Amm. Marc. 26.2.8 *sed studendum est concordiae viribus totis*.

50 Amm. Marc. 26.5.1. In 30.7.4 Ammianus refers again to the *concordia* between the two brothers but ascribes it to the personal affection of Valentinian for his brother: *in Augustum collegium fratrem Valentem ascivit ut germanitate, ita concordia sibi iunctissimum*.

51 *CIL* 3.10596 = *ILS* 762.

52 Themistius, *Or.* 6.75d. In *Or.* 9.127c the same rhetor speaks of *ὁμόνοια*, the Greek equivalent of *concordia*.

53 Symmachus, *Or.* 1.13 *isdem curriculis utrumque sidus emergeret*.

54 E.g. *RIC* 9.116.1.

55 Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 29; R.M. Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p. 94. Noel Lenski observes (p. 30) “In an empire too large for a single Augustus, *Concordia* was crucial for imperial security. Shared strength, guaranteed by fraternal goodwill, was both an asset against the external threats of an extensive frontier and a surety against the omnipresent danger of usurpation from within”.

Nevertheless, the rhetoric of unity, concord and equally shared power, could not disguise that Valentinian was the *Augustus maior* and that Valens and Valentinian's young son Gratian, who was made *Augustus* in 367,⁵⁶ owed their imperial power to him and were thus his subordinates. Angela Pabst and Noel Lenski have drawn attention to the *Versus Paschales* by Ausonius which very adequately articulate the relationship between the three *Augusti* by making a comparison with the unity of the Trinity.

Even on this earth below, we behold an image of this mystery,
where is the emperor, the father, begetter of twin emperors,
who in his sacred majesty embraces his brother and son,
sharing one realm with them, yet not dividing it,
alone holding all, although he has all distributed.⁵⁷

Valens loyally subordinated to his senior brother. After he had suppressed the revolt by Procopius which had occupied Valens in 365–366, he sent the usurper's head to his brother in Gaul.⁵⁸ This can be considered as an act symbolizing subservience by the junior emperor towards his senior. Valentinian does not seem to have supported his brother militarily or otherwise in suppressing the Procopius revolt, and left it completely to Valens to deal with. Valentinian also clearly acted as the senior emperor, for instance, in the case of the appointment of his eight-year-old son Gratian as *Augustus* in 367.⁵⁹ His superiority is evident from the fact that he does not seem to have consulted Valens regarding his intention to make his son their co-*Augustus*. Valentinian presents his son not only as his personal successor but above all as a member of a dynasty which has its residence throughout the whole empire. Gratian was clearly destined for imperial rule in both west and east implying that Valentinian saw his son as the future ruler over an again unified empire. This makes it all the more surprising that Valens was not consulted about his nephew's rise to power. Interestingly, Valentinian in his speech as given by Ammianus makes it clear that

56 Amm. Marc. 27.6.8. Meaghan A. McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West, AD 367–455* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 48–60.

57 Ausonius, *Versus Paschales* 24–28 *Tale et terrenis specimen spectatur in oris / Augustus genitor, geminum sator Augustorum, / qui fratrem natumque pio complexus utrumque / numine partitur regnum neque dividit unum, / omnia solus habens atque omnia dilargitus*; Pabst, *Divisio Regni*, pp. 90–93; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, p. 32. The translation is derived from Lenski.

58 Amm. Marc. 26.10.6, 27.2.10. For Procopius' revolt, of which Ammianus gives an elaborate account (26.5.8 – 26.9), see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, Ch. 2 "The Revolt of Procopius"; Szidat, *Usurpator tanti nominis, passim*.

59 Amm. Marc. 27.6.4–15.

the Roman Empire remains one, ruled by three *Augusti* who acted as colleagues, by a dynasty which had shared its tasks, but had not divided the state.⁶⁰

Only under Theodosius I would the empire again be ruled by one emperor for a few years, as an undivided state. Yet, by the end of the fourth century an undivided empire had become a condition of the past and *divisio regni*, to which the Romans had become accustomed since at least the end of the third century, had become the rule. Only by shared power and *divisio regni* could the unity of empire be preserved against enemies at the frontiers, usurpations and separatist movements.

Concluding Remarks

From an ethnic, cultural and linguistic perspective the Roman Empire had never been a unified state. However, from a political and administrative viewpoint the empire can be considered to some extent as a unity. Unity of empire is often associated with the rule by a single emperor over undivided territory. From that perspective it can be argued that the empire comprised a unity from the reign of Augustus until the beginning of the third century. Thereafter the empire was frequently divided and there were few periods of administrative unity or rule by a single emperor. With the establishment of the so-called New Empire by Diocletian and Constantine division of territory, shared power and responsibilities between various rulers became the rule. Paradoxical as it may sound, Diocletian and his successors applied *divisio regni* to preserve the Roman Empire as a politically, administratively and militarily united state.

Even though the partition in eastern and western half ultimately led to the disintegration of the Roman Empire, the *divisio regni* of 364 fits well in the context of efforts of keeping the empire together and securing it for the future. When Valentinian nominated Valens as co-*Augustus* and when the two brothers divided the empire between them militarily and administratively, the purpose was to preserve the empire and its unity. Modern scholars have described the arrangements of 364 in terms of the first “Reichsteilung” between the Greek east and the Latin west and with the end of unity; they have, as in the case of the division of empire in 395, associated it with the disintegration and decline of the empire.⁶¹ While the Romans may not have experienced the partition of 395 as the final split-up of the empire, as modern historians do, so similarly the

60 Amm. Marc. 27.6.6–12. J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus xxvii* (Leiden, 2009), p. 127 and p. 150.

61 Cf. Pabst's subtitle “Zerfall des Imperium Romanum”.

contemporaries of Valentinian and Valens did not associate the *divisio regni* of 364 with the growing apart of the eastern and western provinces or the beginning of the end of the empire as a unified state.⁶² On the contrary, they most likely associated it with the sustenance and strengthening of the empire and indeed the preservation of its administrative and political unity.

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62 Ammianus, however, did hold Valentinian and Valens responsible for the decay of empire for other reasons. Because of their lack of the basics of civilization they had created an empire in disorder and of repression; J.W. Drijvers, “Decline of Political Culture: Ammianus Marcellinus' Characterization of the Reigns of Valentinian and Valens”, in: D. Brakke, D. Deliyannis, E. Watts (eds.), *Shifting Cultural Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 85–97.

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PART 2

*Unity in the Fourth Century:
Four Case Studies*



Concordia Apostolorum – Concordia Augustorum. Building a Corporate Image for the Theodosian Dynasty

Gitte Lønstrup Dal Santo

“His faith in the apostles of Christ, he displayed in the following manner. First he built a church of Peter and Paul, which had not previously existed in Byzantium”.¹ Thus wrote Procopius in his *Buildings*, a panegyric he dedicated to the Emperor Justinian I (527–565) at some point during the 550s.² He refers to the church Justinian constructed in honour of Sts. Peter and Paul adjacent to the imperial palace in Constantinople. And he makes a significant claim: that this church of Justinian’s was the first in Constantinople ever to have been dedicated to these apostles. It seems, however, that Procopius was misled about Justinian’s church. The cult of Peter and Paul was not new in Justinian’s time. In fact, the cult of these two apostles, customarily associated with the city of Rome on the Tiber, was already well established in the religious and devotional lives of the Christian inhabitants of the New Rome on the Bosphorus.³ During the fifth century, various churches honouring the two apostles were built in and around Constantinople.

This paper will focus on the late fourth-century origins of the Constantinopolitan cult of Sts. Peter and Paul as well two fifth-century churches, arguing that the cult and the designated church buildings were important elements in the making of what Malcolm Errington has called the “corporate image” of the Theodosian dynasty.⁴ Along with law codes and marriage contracts, images

- 1 Procopius *Buildings* 1.4.1, ed. Henry Bronson Dewing (Cambridge, Mass., 1940, 2002), p. 43.
- 2 Averil Cameron dates *Buildings* to c. 554 while Peter Sarris argues for a date after the collapse of the dome of Hagia Sophia in 558, to which he suggests there are hidden references in the text. See Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the sixth century* (London, 1985), p. 85; Peter Sarris, *The Secret History* (London 2007), p. xx.
- 3 I have discussed the Constantinopolitan cult of Peter and Paul at length in my PhD dissertation *Concordia Apostolorum – Concordia Augustorum. The making of shared memory in and between the two Romes in the fourth and fifth century* (discussed at Aarhus University, October 2010). See also Gitte Lønstrup Dal Santo, “Bishop and Believers – Patrons and Viewers: Appropriating the Roman Patrons Saints Peter and Paul in Constantinople,” in *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity*, eds. Stine Birk and Birte Poulsen (Aarhus 2012), pp. 237–257.
- 4 Malcolm Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p. 166.

and numismatic legends, the cult of the two leading apostles reinforced ideologies of unity-of-empire and Roman-ness that were central to the way in which the Theodosian dynasty represented itself. As we shall see, dynastic patronage of a church to Peter and Paul in Constantinople manifested the desire of the Theodosian house to bind together both church and empire and the two branches of the dynasty, the one in the east and the other in the west, through an ideal of *concordia* (concord, unity, harmony, agreement) embodied in the iconography of Sts. Peter and Paul, Roman saints *par excellence*.

The dynasty's desire to establish and maintain such unity must be understood in the context of the ecclesiastical conflicts, the foundation of other imperial residences such as Constantinople, which challenged Rome's leading position in the empire, and the Gothic and Vandal invasions that threatened the empire's survival, which characterised the late fourth century. From his accession in 379, Theodosius I promoted an image of unity between church and empire and between the various groups of people within them. The early reigns of his young sons, Arcadius and Honorius, however, were marked by the rivalry of their guardians, Flavius Rufinus († 395) and Flavius Stilicho († 408). A certain division between the eastern and western halves of the Theodosian dynasty followed the death of Theodosius I in January 395, even if rupture did not endanger the idea of the Roman empire as a single entity. As pointed out by Hervé Inglebert earlier in this volume: "les discordes étaient unitaires".⁵ Indeed, the accession of Theodosius' grandson, Theodosius II, saw a more stable period of consolidation in which the members of this imperial house engaged in and collaborated on a range of activities, among them church building.

The Earliest Constantinopolitan Cult of Peter and Paul

The cult of Peter and Paul seems to have been imported to Constantinople under Theodosius I. During a stay at Rome in 389 Theodosius was accompanied by his eastern praetorian prefect, Flavius Rufinus (future guardian of Arcadius).⁶ It is likely to have been on this trip that Rufinus obtained the relics

5 For an elaboration of Inglebert's themes, *unicité, unite and unification*, see p. 23 and p. 115 respectively.

6 *The Prosopography of the later Roman Empire* (PLRE), eds. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale and J. Morris (Cambridge, Eng., 1971-), 1, pp. 778–781: Rufinus was *Praefectus Praetorius Orientis* from 392 to 395, *consul* in 392 with Arcadius and *magister officiorum* of Theodosius in 388–392. See also Jean Pargoire, "Rufinianes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 8 (1899), pp. 433–37 and "Les homélies de S. Jean Chrysostome en juillet 399," *Echos d'Orient* 3 (1900), p. 156. According to Pargoire, the sanctuary at Rufiniana was inaugurated in 393 or 394, which would have coin-

of Sts. Peter and Paul, in whose honour Rufinus, on his return to the east, founded a palace, a mausoleum and a monastic complex across the strait from Constantinople. The relics were placed in a shrine there, designated as *martyrion* and *apostoleion*. In his ecclesiastical history from the mid-fifth century, Sozomen describes the site as bearing the name of Rufinus, *Rufiniana*, who erected a magnificent palace here and a great church in honour of the apostles, Peter and Paul, which he named *Apostolium*.⁷

Rufinus' church was the first centre of devotion to Peter and Paul within reach of Constantinople's Christian inhabitants. The prominence of this shrine is reflected in a sermon by John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, in July 399 – only four years after Rufinus' assassination on 27 November, 395 by Gainas' Gothic mercenaries on Stilicho's orders. The proximity in time of this macabre event indicates that the site (which had become imperial property) had not suffered damnation with its founder. In the sermon, John Chrysostom describes how a few days earlier, he and his congregation crossed the strait to celebrate the feast of Peter and Paul:

Three days ago rain and heavy showers broke, and swept away everything [...]. There were litanies and prayers of intercession, and our entire city went like a torrent to the places of the apostles, and took as their advocates Saint Peter and blessed Andrew, the pair of apostles, Paul and Timothy. After that, when God's anger was placated, crossing the sea, daring the waves, we went to Peter, the fundament of the faith, and Paul, the vessel of choice, and celebrated a spiritual festival.⁸

It is impossible to say much about the people who journeyed with Chrysostom from *The Church of the Holy Apostles* in Constantinople proper – a city which possessed the relics of Andrew and Timothy, whom Chrysostom describes as Peter and Paul's 'deputies' – to the martyrion known as *Rufiniana*, across the strait. All the same, it is clear that a group of people venerated Peter and Paul in Constantinople at this time. As a number of late-fourth and early-fifth

cided with a council held in Constantinople on 24 September 394. See also Alan Thacker "Rome of the martyrs: Saints, Cults and Relics, Fourth to Seventh centuries," in *Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, eds. Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar (Aldershot, 2007), p. 41; John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–425* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 134–136 and 227–228.

7 Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.17, ed. Joseph Bidez (Berlin, 1960), pp. 370–371.

8 John Chrysostom, *Contra ludos et theatra*, ed. *Patrologia Graeca* 56, pp. 263–270. English translation in Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom, The Early Church Fathers* (London, 2000), p. 120.

century sarcophagi excavated in Constantinople show, some also chose these apostles as their patrons in death.⁹ These sarcophagi, Rufinus' *martyrion*, Chrysostom's sermon and Sozomen's comment all provide significant evidence for a flourishing cult of Peter and Paul on the Bosphorus at the end of the fourth century.

What is more, John's sermon of July 399 demonstrates that the Feast of Peter and Paul was celebrated at Constantinople on June 29, in accordance with the long established tradition of the Church of Rome on the Tiber. In other words, the Church of the 'New Rome' observed in this instance, at least, the Roman festival calendar as opposed to that of other eastern churches such as Antioch, Jerusalem and Nicomedia, where the Feast of Peter and Paul was celebrated on December 28.¹⁰ Indeed, the broader cultural setting of the cult of Peter and Paul in the New Rome seems closely connected to the ideas that had built up around the cult of these apostles in the Old Rome.¹¹ For this reason, the next section will provide a brief overview of the cult of Peter and Paul at Rome, before proceeding to the first church dedicated to these apostles within the walls of Constantinople.

Rome and Romanitas – Damasus and Concordia – Peter and Paul

The controversial pontificate of Damasus in the late-fourth century represents an important milestone in the development of the Roman cult of Peter and Paul. Damasus consistently promoted the two apostles as emblems of unity within the Roman Church, encouraging the proliferation of the iconographical type known as the *concordia apostolorum*, an image of Peter and Paul facing each other as if to demonstrate agreement and inseparability (fig. 6.1). As Charles Pietri and John Huskinson have long since demonstrated, the Christian notion of *concordia apostolorum* appropriated an established ideology and iconography, those of *concordia augustorum* – unity between emperors – that had been frequently stamped on Roman coins since the second century

9 The most prominent of these is the so-called Sarigüzel sarcophagus. See Gitte Lønstrup Dal Santo, "Bishop and Believers", pp. 250–254.

10 Hans Lietzmann, *Die drei ältesten Martyrologien* (Bonn, 1911), p. 12.

11 Chrysostom's acknowledgement and admiration of Peter and Paul as Roman patron saints is also reflected in his homily to Romans (*In Epist ad Rom. Homil* 32.4). On Chrysostom and unity, *homonoia*, within the church, see discussion in Nathaneal Andrade, "The Processions of John Chrysostom and the Contested Spaces of Constantinople," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18.2 (2010), pp. 180–181.



FIGURE 6.1

Fourth-century gold glass (drinking vessel or bowl) featuring Peter and Paul, whose names are inscribed above and behind their heads around the border of the glass. They are depicted side by side, their faces turned towards each other as the Christian counterpart to the secular iconography of two emperors in Concordia. PHOTO © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



FIGURE 6.2

Concordia Augustorum. The reverse of a golden coin from 161 AD showing Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus shaking hands in a sign of concord. The inscription reads CONCORDIAE AVGVSTOR. This is one of the earliest Roman issues of a type that would continue to be minted for centuries. PHOTO © MÜNZKABINETT DER STAATLICHEN MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, 18200695. PHOTO BY LUTZ-JÜRGEN LÜBKE.

(fig. 6.2).¹² Hence, Damasus used the image of Peter and Paul as a Christian counterpart to the imperial iconography as a way of shaping the ideal and ideology of Christian concord. Secular and ecclesiastical programmes were equally value-laden. This Christian image was widely diffused at the time on golden glasses and bronze medallions imprinted with the faces of the two apostles,

¹² Charles Pietri, "Concordia Apostolorum et Renovatio Urbis. Culte des martyrs et propagande pontificale," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité* 73 (1961), 275–322; John M. Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum: Christian Propaganda at Rome in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: A Study in Early Christian Iconography and Iconology*, BAR International Series (Oxford, 1982).

which are likely to have been distributed or sold during the annual feast on June 29 attended by locals and visitors alike.¹³

When Damasus erected an epigram to Peter and Paul at their joint place of worship, the so-called *memoria apostolorum* on the Via Appia, the veneration of the two apostles together – and by extension the notion of their *concordia* – was again front and centre.¹⁴ Emphasising the essential duality of the cult, the inscription read:

You should know that two saints used to dwell here
 Their names which you seek are Peter and Paul [...]
 [Rome] This city was far more deserving than any other city of claiming
 the two apostles for its honorary citizens
 Damasus here conveys your praises to the new stars.¹⁵

With this epigram, Damasus consolidated the joint cult of Peter and Paul, which had existed at this site since the mid-third century as more than six hundred *grafitti* show.¹⁶ His emphasis on apostolic unity must be understood as a response to current needs and necessities. On a local scale, Damasus made an effort to gather competing schismatic groups in Rome within a unified church under his own authority. This hope for unity was reflected in the concord of the apostles, one which, significantly, was only achieved after their initial disagreements at apostolic meetings in Jerusalem and Antioch (Gal. 2:11–14). On a larger scale, Damasus' aim was to defend the sovereign primacy

13 Charles Pietri, *Roma christiana: Recherches sur l'église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III 311–440* (Rome, 1976), p. 1540.

14 Damasus also raised the question of concord and discord within the church in other epigrams in nearby catacombs, such as the one decorating the tomb of St Eusebius in San Callixtus. See Antonio Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana* (The Vatican City, 1942), n° 18.

15 *HIC HABITASSE/HABITARE PRIUS SANCTOS COGNOSCERE DEBES / NOMINA QUI SQ. PETRI PARITER PAULIQUE REQUIRIS [...]* / *ROMA SUOS POTIUS MERUIT DEFENDERE CIVES / HAEC DAMASUS VESTRAS REFERAT NOVA SIDERA LAUDES*. See Giovanni Battista De Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saecula antiquiores*, henceforth ICUR (Rome, 1857–1915) 5, 13273, and Antonio Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, n° 20. English translation by Dennis E. Trout, "Damasus and the Invention of Early Christian Rome," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003), p. 532 note 38. Although the inscription is no longer extant, the text is known from early medieval itineraries, among them the eighth- or ninth-century *Itinerarium Einsiedlense* (ICUR 2. 1).

16 On the *grafitti* discovered on March 16, 1915, see Antonio Ferrua, "Rileggendo i graffiti di San Sebastiano," *Civiltà Cattolica* 3 (1956), 428–437 and 4, pp. 134–141.

of the Roman church based on its foundation by Peter and Paul. By claiming, as he did in the inscription at the *memoria apostolorum*, that the apostles were citizens of Rome despite their eastern origins, Damasus underlined the pre-eminence of the city and its patron saints. Thus, he became crucial for defining the concept of Christian *romanitas* or Roman-ness, embodied in the image of the two apostles along with the notion of concord.¹⁷

Theodosian Patronage at Rome and Ravenna

It appears as if the Theodosian House bought into Damasus ideas of Christian *concordia* and *romanitas*, inasmuch as both ideologies served their own interests. Certainly, Theodosius I's *Cunctos Populos* edict of 380 aimed at creating unity within the church and thus within the empire. The edict forbade all heresies and expressly defined the orthodox faith as the faith of the Church of Rome with Damasus as its representative. Theodosius I and his co-emperors, Valentinian II and Gratian, matched these words with deeds, sponsoring the construction of the monumental St. Paul's Basilica on Rome's Via Ostiense.¹⁸ The lavish building became the equivalent to the grandiose basilica of St. Peter recently inaugurated at the Vatican. Moreover, the emperors connected these

17 While definitions of *romanitas* vary, the term is used here to denote Roman-ness: in particular, the power of being Roman and how that identity was combined with additional identities like 'Christian' and 'Constantinopolitan'. With respect to Constantinople, the Roman-ness of the city was defined by Roman institutions such as the Senate and prototypical elements of urban texture like the circus and the forum.

18 The construction of the basilica was undertaken by the Emperors Theodosius I, Valentinian II and Gratian. It began around 383–84 or 386, but Damasus († 384) and Gratian († 383) both died either shortly after or possibly even before. The basilica was consecrated by Damasus' successor Siricius (384–399) in 390 during the reigns of Valentinian II in the west (375–392) and Theodosius I (379–395) in the east, and completed in 395 during the reign of Theodosius' sons Arcadius (395–408) and Honorius (395–423). For the rescript of 384 from Sallustius to Theodosius I, Valentinian II, and Arcadius, see John Curran, *Pagan city and Christian capital: Rome in the fourth century* (New York, 2000), p. 146–147. See also Thacker, "Rome of the martyrs", p. 31; Bryan Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy AD 300–850* (Oxford, 1984), p. 237. The basilica is not mentioned in Damasus' or Siricius' *vitae* in the *Liber Pontificalis*, but the attribution to Siricius is documented in *Collectio Avellana* and in the inscription on a column in the portico outside the northern side of transept. See Marina Docci, *San Paolo fuori le mura: dalle origini alla basilica delle "origini"* (Rome, 2006), pp. 29–33; Giorgio Filippi, "La Basilica di San Paolo fuori le mura," in *Pietro e Paolo. La storia, il culto, la memoria nei primi secoli*, ed. Angela Donati (Milan, 2000), p. 59.



FIGURE 6.3 *Fifth-century enamel and gold-leaf medallion depicting Licinia Eudoxia, daughter of Theodosius II and wife of Valentinian III – entrusted with the role of bridging the eastern and western halves of the dynasty.* PHOTO © DÉPARTEMENT DES MONNAIES, MÉDAILLES ET ANTIQUES, BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, INV. M. 1688.

prestigious burial basilicas housing the believed tombs or *memoriae* of Peter and Paul with processional roads and arches.¹⁹

Patronage of Sts. Peter and Paul seems to have become a *Leitmotif* of the Theodosian dynasty. A dedicatory inscription from the *Titulus Apostolorum* at Rome (now S. Pietro in Vincoli) shows that Theodosius II sponsored the reconstruction of this church and its contemporary rededication to Sts. Peter and Paul by Sixtus III around 439: *THEODOSIUS PATER EUDOCIA CUM CONIUGE VOTUM CUMQUE SUO SUPPLEX EUDOXIA NOMINE SOLVIT* (Theodosius, the father, together with his wife Eudocia and with Eudoxia, in her own name, humbly fulfilled the vow).²⁰ The inscription names Theodosius II's daughter (fig. 6.3),

19 Margarete Steinby ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1 (Rome, 1993–2000), p. 96 and 5, p. 147.

20 ICUR 2, pp. 110, 66; Richard Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianorum Romae* 3 (The Vatican City, 1937–77), p. 181. I am grateful to Marianne Pade for discussing the English translation of the inscription.

Licina Eudoxia (422–462) and describes her involvement in the project as the execution of a vow of sponsorship made by her mother and father. Owing to the patronage of this empress, the church came to be unofficially known as *titulus eudoxiae*.²¹

Earlier in the 430s Licinia Eudoxia had fulfilled another vow made on her behalf by her father in 424, when she, as a girl of two or three years of age, was betrothed to her cousin, the Western Emperor, Valentinian III. The pair was married in Constantinople on October 29, 437.²² Such marriage contracts had precedents within the dynasty: Theodosius I, for example, married Galla of the house of Valentinian II in 387.²³ To commemorate the engagement of 424, the wedding in 437, the crowning of Valentinian III and the shared consulship of Theodosius and Valentinian between 425 and 426, the imperial mints struck gold *solidi* that proclaimed the collaboration, connection and unity between the two halves of the Theodosian House embodied in the two emperors. The *SALUS REI PUBLICAE* legend that appeared on many of these coins is closely linked to the notion of *concordia augustorum* in as much as *salus*, public safety, was the desired outcome of unity within the empire. Interestingly, the coins issued under Theodosius II, invoking the rhetoric of concord, outnumber those of Honorius in the ratio of about five to two.²⁴

On the special *FELICITER NUPTIIS solidi* from 437 (fig 6.4–5), the senior emperor Theodosius II is shown embracing the bride (Licinia Eudoxia) and groom (Valentinian III). As the image sought to convey, the wedding was a clear indication of the importance of exchanging gestures of concord between the eastern and western emperors of the Theodosian dynasty. As part of these nuptial festivities, Theodosius II also published the famous compilation of laws, *Codex Theodosianus*, which was intended to apply in both parts of the empire. The code was despatched with the imperial entourage that escorted the young couple west after the wedding and presented to the Senate upon the imperial couple's arrival at Rome on December 25, 438.²⁵

21 The first documentation of this informal epithet (which continued until 959) is a letter written by Gregory the Great (c. 600) mentioning two presbyters from the *titulus eudoxiae* (*Epist* I, 366). See Richard Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum*, 3, p. 182.

22 See for instance Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7, 44, ed. Günther Christian Hansen (Berlin, 1995), p. 393 and *The Chronicle of Marcellinus Comes* under the year 437, ed. Brian Croke (Sydney, 1995), p. 16.

23 Walter E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the decline of Rome* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 20–25.

24 John P.C. Kent, *The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts* (Roman Imperial Coinage) 10 (London, 1994), pp. 70–73.

25 John Matthews, *Laying Down the Law: A Study of the Theodosian Code* (New Haven, 2000), pp. 7–9 and Fergus Millar *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II 408–450* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 58.



FIGURE 6.4

FELICITER NUPTIIS festal solidus struck at Constantinople for the wedding of Valentinian III and Eudoxia in 437. The solidus features a portrait of Theodosius II, the senior emperor, who is shown embracing the bride and groom. With this gesture, he embodies the oneness of

the empire, the future of which the wedding, as an act of *concordia augustorum* was meant to ensure. PHOTO © CLASSICAL NUMISMATIC GROUP, INC, [HTTP://WWW.CNGCOINS.COM](http://www.cngcoins.com).



FIGURE 6.5

FELICITER NUPTIIS festal solidus struck at Thessalonica for the wedding of Valentinian III and Eudoxia in 437. The solidus features a portrait of Valentinian III, appointed Caesar in 424 at the age of five, when he was engaged to Licinius Eudoxia, who was barely three years

old. PHOTO © CLASSICAL NUMISMATIC GROUP, INC, [HTTP://WWW.CNGCOINS.COM](http://www.cngcoins.com).

In these years, Rome was again an imperial residence. The young imperial couple alternated between their palaces at Rome and Ravenna, where Licinia Eudoxia was proclaimed *Augusta* on 6 August 439. She also spent several months in Rome, where Valentinian joined her from 24 January to 20 March 440.²⁶ An inscription found in an aristocratic dwelling near the Lateran, dedicated to Eudoxia and Valentinian by the Roman nobleman Flavius Florinus, of whom there are otherwise no records, could reflect her stay in the city.

Dominae nostrae
Eudoxiae Augustae
Coniugi d(omini) n(ostri) Placidi

26 For the proclamation of Eudoxia as *Augusta* after the birth of their first child, Eudocia, see *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis* 31: "et facta est domna Eudoxia Augusta Ravennae VIII idus Augusti" and *Chronica Gallica* 511 s.a.: "Eudoxia Ravenna regnum accepit" (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctorum Antiquissimorum, Chronica Minora* ed. Theodor Mommsen (Berlin, 1892, 1961) I, p. 523; PLRE 2, pp. 410–12 "Eudoxia 2"). See also Andrew Gillett, "Rome, Ravenna, and the last emperors," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001), p. 143 and Julia Burman, "The Athenian Empress Eudocia," in *Post-Herulian Athens*, ed. Paavo Castrén (Helsinki, 1994), p. 85.

Valentiniani perpetui
 victoris et triumphatoris
 semper Augusti
 Fl(avius) Florinus v(ir) c(larissimus)
 devotissimus
 pietatis eorum²⁷

Certainly, the devotion that the young empress and emperor inspired among some members of Rome's elite circles, can be felt.

The couple also seems to have been instrumental in transplanting Roman devotion to Peter and Paul in fertile soil in their other capital, Ravenna. The evidence strongly suggests that Valentinian and Licinia Eudoxia were responsible for dedicating a church to Peter and Paul, *Ecclesia Apostolorum* (today's S. Francesco), at Ravenna during the late 430s.²⁸ Indeed, these two sister churches at Rome and Ravenna seem to express close co-operation between the church and the imperial house as well as the special importance that members of the Theodosian dynasty attached to the cult of Sts. Peter and Paul during the 430s and 440s. Did the dynasty complete this patronal programme by erecting a church to Peter and Paul in Constantinople? Certainly, in the concord of the apostles, *concordia apostolorum*, they seem to have seen a reflection of the desired concord of the eastern and western branches of their imperial house, *concordia augustorum*.

The Church of Sts Peter and Paul in the Triconch at Constantinople

Before the reign of Theodosius II, it seems, there was no church dedicated exclusively to Peter and Paul within the walls of Constantinople. Yet according to Theophanes, an early ninth-century chronicler, a church dedicated to *The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Triconch* burnt down during the reign of Zeno,

²⁷ During the excavation a fresco and a hoard of coins (now missing) were found. Although it remains uncertain, Scrinari has suggested that the couple depicted on the fresco is Eudoxia and Valentinian III. See Valnea Santa Maria Scrinari, *Horti Domitiae*, Monumenti di antichità Cristiana (The Vatican City, 1991–1997), pp. 261–262. See also Valnea Santa Maria Scrinari, “Contributo all’urbanistica tardo antica sul campo Laterano,” *Actes du X^e Congrès international d’archéologie chrétienne*, 3 (Rome, 1989), p. 2213; Paolo Liverani, “L’area lateranense in età tardoantica e le origini del patriarcato,” *Mélanges de l’École Française* 116.1 (Rome, 2004) 17–49.

²⁸ Friedrich W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des Spätantiken Abendlandes*, 2 (Wiesbaden, 1976–), pp. 308–318.

emperor from 474 to 491 (with a break from 475 to 476).²⁹ This fire probably broke out during the series of earthquakes that struck the capital from September 24, 479 – some fifty years before Justinian inaugurated the church to Peter and Paul, which Procopius claimed was Constantinople's first of its kind. Liturgical texts confirm that an annual commemoration ceremony took place in the church in the Triconch on November 6.³⁰ The date is confirmed by the witness of such sixth-century historians as John Malalas, Marcellinus Comes, Theodor Lector and Procopius, according to whom every year on November 6 the citizens of Constantinople remembered the fearful eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 472.³¹ This had caused ashes, blown with wind from Italy, to fall as burning rain over Constantinople. The scene was later vividly depicted in an illustration from the *Menologion* of Basil II (976–1025): burning ash falls from heaven, while people seek protection and refuge in a church. There is good reason to suggest that the building in the miniature represents *The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Triconch* rebuilt by Justin II, in which the commemoration of the fall of the dust took place during the medieval period.³²

If the annual commemoration of this event at the church in the Triconch reflects the original flight of the people of Constantinople to it, seeking the protection of Peter and Paul at the time of Vesuvius' eruption, it recalls the actions of Chrysostom's congregation following the terrible storm of 399. Either way, if we can trust the sources, the church in the Triconch must have been

29 *The Chronicle of Theophanes* AM 6064, ed. Carolus de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), p. 244. See also Cyril Mango & Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford, 1997), p. 361. A reconstruction of the church was undertaken by Justin I in 571–572, as noted in the same passage.

30 See the *Synaxarium* and the *Typicon*, a ninth- and a tenth-century calendar, based on older archives: Hippolyte Delehaye ed., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Brussels, 1902), p. 198, *Synaxaria Selecta* H: 1.2. add: & P: 1.2 and 882; Juan Mateos ed., *Le Typicon de la Grande Église. Ms. Sainte-Croix no 40, X siècle. Introduction, commentary and translation*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 1 (Rome, 1962), pp. 90–93. For the location, see also Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 362. According to the *Typikon*, the synaxis took place in 'Sts. Peter and Paul in the Triconch', where a morning procession went from the Great Church to the Forum. After the usual prayers, the procession went to the aforementioned synaxis. The patriarch said the *Gloria Patri* in the Forum as well as in the Triconch.

31 *The Chronicle of Marcellinus Comes* in the year 472, ed. Croke, p. 115. *The Chronicle of John Malalas* 14.372.42 ed. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), p. 372; Theodor Lector, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 398, ed. Günther Christian Hansen (Berlin, 1995), p. 111; Procopius, *The History of the Wars* 6.4.27, ed. Henry Bronson Dewing (Cambridge Mass., 1960), p. 327.

32 *Il Menologio di Basilio II*, Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613, *Codices e Vaticanis selecti* 8, 1–2 (Turin, 1907), pl. 164.

built before 472, in order to house the ceremony commemorating the fall of the ash occurring in that year. The year 472 is thus a *terminus ante quem* for its construction.³³ For a *terminus post quem*, we can note that the church in the Triconch is not mentioned in the *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae*, a list of buildings at Constantinople from 425. *The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Triconch* must, therefore, have been built between 425 and 472, that is to say while a Theodosian sat on the throne.³⁴

Although it remains uncertain who the patron of this church was, given the Theodosian building program and the other circumstantial evidence, it seems likely that he or she was a member of the Theodosian house. Indeed, it is plausible that, like the *Ecclesia Apostolorum* at Ravenna, the *Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Triconch* at Constantinople was built as a sister church to the *titulus Apostolorum* in Rome. As such it would have been one in a range of gestures of imperial unity, *concordia augustorum*, the eastern and western branches of the Theodosian House exchanged during the 430s, a unity of which the *concordia* of the apostles functioned as a symbol.

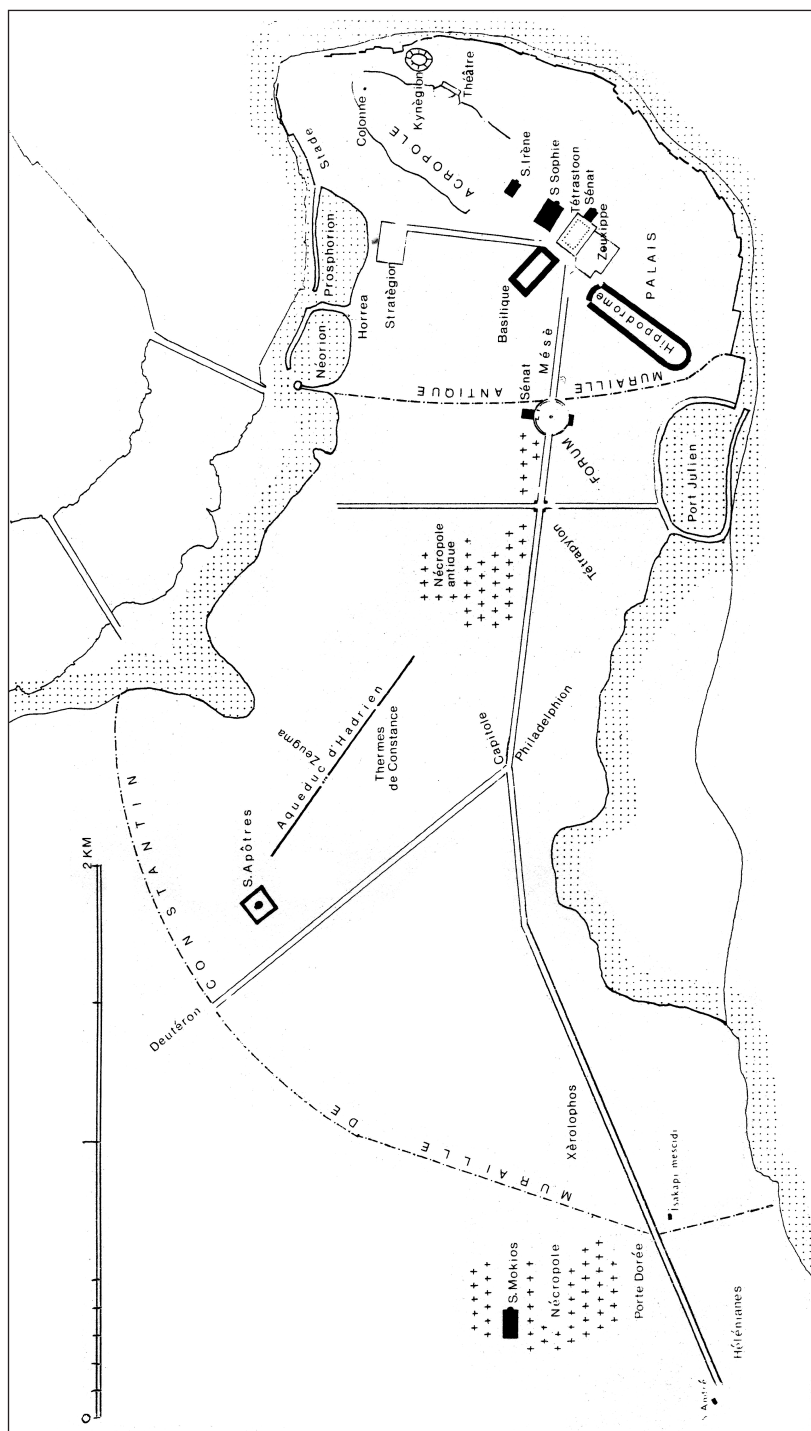
The very location of the church in the Triconch seems to suggest that an ideology of concord inspired its construction. The church was prestigiously located near Constantinople's *Capitolium* and the *Philadelphion* palace, an important nodal point for processions through the city (map 6.1).³⁵ Crucially, the toponym *Philadelphion*, which means 'brotherly love', derived from the famous representation of imperial unity flanking the entrance to the *Philadelphion* Palace, that of the embracing Tetrarchs (now at Venice).³⁶ Indeed, in a city

33 Janin dates the church in the Triconch to the late fourth century, but the date seems implausible, as Chrysostom does not pay a visit during the celebration of the feast of Peter and Paul. See Raymond Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, Les églises et les monastères, 3 (Paris, 1953, 1969), p. 401.

34 The Emperor Anthemius (467–472) was a Theodosian in as much as he married Marcian's (450–457) daughter, Marcia Euphemia: Marcian was married to Pulcheria, Theodosius II's sister.

35 For the location of the Triconch near the Capitolium, see the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 882.1 and Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 362. See also Cyril Mango *Le développement urbain de Constantinople IV^e–VII^e siècles* (Paris, 1985), p. 28–30; Franz Alto Bauer, "Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity," in *Imperial Art as Christian Art – Christian Art as Imperial Art: Expression and meaning in art and architecture from Constantine to Justinian*, Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia 15, eds. Rasmus Brandt and O. Steen (Rome, 2001), p. 30.

36 Franz Alto Bauer, "Urban Space and Ritual", p. 31; Franz Alto Bauer, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike: Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Konstantinopel und Ephesos* (Mainz am Rhein, 1996), p. 228.



MAP 6.1

Map of Constantinople showing the intersection at the Capitolium and Philadelphion, where the Church of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Triconch appears to have been located. It burnt down during the reign of the Emperor Zeno (474–491) but was rebuilt in 571–572 by the Emperor Justin I. FROM: MANGO, DÉVELOPPEMENT (1985).

where sacred sites directly associated with the apostles Peter and Paul were absent and had to be created *ex novo* (as opposed to the prestigious tombs at Rome) what would have been more appropriate in the light of the Theodosian endeavours at Rome, than to erect a church to the pair of apostles, emblems of *concordia apostolorum* and *concordia fratrum* i.e. ‘brotherly love’, at this cross-road invested with symbols of *concordia augustorum* and φιλαδέλφεια? ³⁷

Moreover, in this neighbourhood of the *Philadelphion*, Theodosius’ daughter Licinia Eudoxia later erected another family church. As recently suggested by Kim Bowes, this church served to enhance the connection between the Theodosian family and the Church. ³⁸ This is also likely to have been part of the intention behind the churches dedicated to Peter and Paul by these imperial patrons in their three residential cities Rome, Constantinople and Ravenna: i.e. to enhance and embody their Christian *romanitas* and the unity of church and empire at a time when (in the face of heretics within and invading barbarians from without) such unity was especially desirable. By merging the ideologies of *concordia apostolorum* and *concordia augustorum*, the Theodosian House would have shaped their “corporate image” in continuity with both traditional Roman and more novel Christian values, moulding the notions of *concordia* and *romanitas* to their own purposes. This corporate image proclaimed the Theodosians as pious Roman emperors of a unified Christian Empire, and would have helped ensure that they were remembered as such by future generations. This dynastic memory of unity was materialised in laws and edicts, coins and wedding ceremonies, images, inscriptions and buildings: “Theodosius I followed the Dynastic Principle, by making it clear throughout that the integrity of the Empire depended upon himself and his family, including its women. The architecture, patched together laboriously from often discordant elements, nonetheless displayed a unifying theme.” ³⁹

A significant target group for such a carefully constructed and mediated corporate image must have been Constantinople’s very cosmopolitan elite, made up as it was by newly created senators, praetors, *officiales*, *comites* and more from across the eastern empire. Theodosius I faced the local challenge of unit-

37 On *concordia fratrum*, see Herbert L. Kessler, “The Meeting of Peter and Paul in Rome: An Emblematic Narrative of Spiritual Brotherhood,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987) 267–268.

38 Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (New York, 2008), pp. 107–109. The church *Haghia Euphemia en tois Olybriou* was dedicated and cared for by Eudoxia’s daughter Placidia, her husband Olybrius and later by their daughter, Anicia Juliana.

39 Kenneth Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), p. 7.

ing not only religious schismatics (i.e. Arians) in much the same way as Damasus did, but also the composite elite consisting of ambitious individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. And like Damasus, Theodosius took a series of measures to create common grounds among the elite groups of his new capital. As noted by Inglebert, the fifth century was a period of “unification mentale, au moins telle qu’elle fut vécue par ses élites, mais aussi concrète” (p. 24 in this volume).

One way of encouraging a sense of unity and community among these groups was enforcing uniformity. As recently and persuasively treated by Errington, Theodosius issued regulations on public appearance imposing, for instance, the traditional Roman dress code of *toga* and *paenula*.⁴⁰ The fine for failing to exhibit oneself in traditional Roman attire was up to 20 pounds of gold. Senators risked exclusion from the assembly, while government officials risked exile from the city! According to Errington,

The existence of an adequate socioeconomic elite was essential for a ruling city in the empire [Constantinople], and the creation of an effective senatorial class in the East, together with its focus on the new city of Constantinople, turned out to be a major factor in binding the eastern land-owning classes into the imperial governmental structure and creating vested political and economic interests in its continuation.⁴¹

From this perspective, it seems fitting that Theodosius I and his co-emperors should have promoted the cult of the founders and patron saints of the Roman Church, Peter and Paul, investing in significant building projects at Rome to regulate the spaces of Christian worship and its front figures. Like the dress code and public building programme, which closely followed Roman models, the cult of Peter and Paul can be seen as part of the package of things ‘Roman’ that continued to be imported to Constantinople under Theodosius I. While he sought to emphasise the unity of church and empire, his grandson Theodosius II expanded the use of the traditional Roman value, virtue and ideology of *concordia* to unite the two halves of the dynasty itself at a time when Christian and Roman had become far less distant categories. Materialised in churches to Peter and Paul in their three residential cities, *concordia* stood at the very core of the dynastic memory, which the Theodosian dynasty was building for future generations.

40 *Codex Theodosianus* 15.1.25 and 14.10.01. See Malcolm Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, pp. 165–167.

41 Malcolm Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, pp. 146–147.

Concluding Remarks

In light of Hervé Inglebert's study, this article has explored the combination of political, religious and cultural aspects, which shaped and reinforced the relationship between the eastern and western parts of the empire. The three themes of *unicité*, *unité* and *unification* emerged in various ways: Theodosius II's appointment and legitimisation of Valentinian III reflects the political dimension of *unicité* or oneness and inseparability of the *imperium*, while the ideology of *concordia* reflects the rhetorical dimension. To be sure, the rhetorical dimension of *concordia* was not only linguistic: the written legends on the coinage were accompanied by the widespread iconographical templates of emperors – and apostles – embracing, shaking hands or looking at each other.

The theme of *unité* with its connotations of community and connectedness has come up in relation to the Theodosian House providing several emperors and empresses to the eastern and western courts and minting *solidi* to mark their commitment to each other, such as the wedding in 437. The act of marriage and the Theodosian Code, published during this event, also represent juridical aspects of *unité*. As pointed out by Inglebert: "Théodose II ne pensait pas différemment en donnant un empereur de sa famille à l'Occident en 423 en la personne de Valentinien III et en faisant promulguer son Code à Rome et à Constantinople en 438, réaffirmant ainsi l'unité dynastique et juridique d'un monde romain que l'on ne pouvait pas penser pluriel (p. 23)."

There also seems to have been a juridical aspect of the cult of Peter and Paul: in a law issued in Constantinople on February 1, 425, Theodosius II and Valentinian III decreed that "the commemoration of the apostolic passion" (*et commemoratio apostolicae passionis*) must be "duly celebrated by everyone [...]" As I have discussed elsewhere, the commemoration almost certainly refers to the joint martyrdom of Peter and Paul, which, seems to have been recognized as one of the Christian feasts binding the, now, Christian empire together.⁴²

Inglebert's third theme, *unification*, addresses religious and cultural mentality (among other things) based on a set of shared Roman values. This is crucial to the present study in as much as the cult of Peter and Paul concerns precisely that: exporting the Roman cult to Constantinople was closely related to the idea or mentality of *romanitas* or Roman-ness – that is, being Roman. As Inglebert emphasises, *unification* depends on manifestations of *unicité* and *unite*. Indeed, the religious and cultural mentality relating to Sts. Peter and Paul, the cult and its ideology of *concordia* was linked to the diffusion of the imperial

42 For a more detailed discussion, see Gitte Lønstrup Dal Santo, "Bishop and Believers", pp. 244–247.

ideology of *concordia* (*unicité*) and the support of the Theodosian House across the empire (*unité*). While Inglebert's conceptual distinction may have little effect on the outcome of this article, it certainly responds to the discourse that outlined in his study.

To conclude, it would be appropriate to return to Procopius with whom this article began. We know from such sixth-century historians as Malalas, Evagrius and Agathias that Procopius was read by his contemporaries and that parts of the *Buildings* may have been read at the court.⁴³ Like any panegyric, it was designed to maximize the achievements of the ruler and exaggeration and manipulation of facts are fundamental to this genre. Yet much existing scholarship has taken Procopius' text at face value. This is doubtless why the pre-Justinianic cult and churches of the apostles Peter and Paul in Constantinople have been neglected.

For this reason, this re-reading of Procopius has focused less on the impact of his work on his contemporaries. Its focus has instead been its long-term impact on the scholarship on the churches of Peter and Paul in Constantinople. This is crucial, because scholars often use Procopius' panegyric as a catalogue or a checklist, providing factual information on the buildings commissioned by Justinian.⁴⁴ But this article has countered Procopius' claim that Justinian was the first patron of a church to Peter and Paul in Constantinople by demonstrating that the Constantinopolitan cult and churches of these apostles had been key to Theodosian patronage and dynastic memory-making before the time of Justinian. Rather than being original, Justinian's patronage was a continuation of that pursued by his Theodosian predecessors. And like the Theodosian churches erected to Peter and Paul, Justinian's church was an embodiment of the *concordia* established between the bishop of Rome in the west and the Constantinopolitan court in the east to put an end to the twenty-year-long Acacian schism (484–518/19). The term *concordia* emerges explicitly from the correspondence regarding the transfer of relics of Peter and Paul from Rome needed for the inauguration of Justinian's church at Constantinople.⁴⁵

43 Warren T. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (London, 2007), p. 227. Treadgold notes that Procopius' heirs might have arranged for the distribution of *Buildings* that would have interested the reading public and gratified the emperor.

44 Jaś Elsner, "The Rhetoric of Buildings in the *de Aedificiis* of Procopius," in *Art and text in Byzantine culture*, ed. Liz James (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), p. 45: "modern scholarship has effectively missed the rhetorical point that Procopius' *Buildings* are not factual descriptions but literary ciphers for much more than accuracy could ever afford".

45 *Concordia* is referred to in several of the correspondences between the Constantinopolitan court and the Roman church. See *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 35, 2, pp. 143, 144, 147, 148, 191, 217.

Once again Peter and Paul were called upon as emblems of unity between church and empire, and between the old Rome on the Tiber and the New Rome on the Bosphorus. Nonetheless, their pre-Justinianic cult and churches in Constantinople have not been widely acknowledged – and for the most part the cult and the ideology of concord have been limited to Rome. However, the commemoration of the Roman festival of June 29, 399 and the annual commemoration of the fall of the ash at *The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in the Triconch* are compelling evidence for the importation of the cult of Peter and Paul at Constantinople and with it, its inherited connotation of *concordia* – no longer as a separate Christian counterpart of imperial ideology, but now merged with it. At a time when division may have been the easy choice, a commitment to religious and imperial unity, *Concordia Apostolorum* and *Concordia Augustorum* was at the forefront of Theodosian politics.

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Looking at Athletics in the Fourth Century: The Unification of the Spectacle Landscape in East and West

Sofie Remijsen

Games and the Roman Empire

The western and eastern Mediterranean both had their own traditions of what scholarship today usually calls ‘games’: events held in large structures, often in stone, with hundreds or thousands of seats arranged around a central stage, on which a few protagonists were engaged in demanding feats of sports or arts that excited the assembled crowd. Although the word ‘games’ is a translation of *ludi*, it is in reality a modern category that covers a far larger spectrum of events than this Latin term. In the Greek cultural tradition, games were usually organized in the competitive format of the *agon*: free citizens voluntarily competed against their peers in athletics or in performing arts. In the Roman Republic, *ludi* were not necessarily competitive; chariot races were of course a contest, but theatrical shows were not. At the *munera* in the amphitheater, gladiators fought each other or *venatores* fought wild animals. The protagonists of the *ludi* and *munera* were not highly respected citizens who had volunteered to participate, but a mix of slaves and free men, whose citizen rights had been confined.

Research of the previous decades has convincingly shown how, despite the obvious differences, both traditions of games could play a comparable socio-political role in the political culture of the Roman Empire, because they shared a central feature: they offered the ruling classes the opportunity to make a positive connection with the crowd. Euergetism was a central element of the political culture in East and West alike. The organization of any type of games required a considerable organizational effort by wealthy sponsors, which was acknowledged by the community, which in return honored them with their cheers and other signs of appreciation.¹ The benefactor in this way converted

1 For a general discussion of euergetism see Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire. Citizens, Elites, and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, Eng., 2009), esp. pp. 6–12.

his economic capital into social capital, and saw his elevated position in society confirmed. Games not only confirmed the power of the local ruling classes, but also of the emperor. It was indeed important for a Roman emperor to be present at the games, for these were occasions where he interacted closely with the people. They could approach him with petitions and he was expected to react to these in an interested, civil manner. This climate even allowed for criticism, but riots were a rare event. The normal state was social harmony, for the exuberant atmosphere at the games normally created positive emotions towards the ruler, who was loudly acclaimed.²

Emperors were hence present at all kinds of games in the capital: he (or a carefully chosen representative) attended *ludi* or *munera* in Rome, which he had sponsored from his own fortune or which had been sponsored by Roman magistrates as part of their office. When he travelled through the Empire, he attended locally organized games. In the Greek-speaking part of the Empire these were typically *agones*. Already during the first decades of the Empire, Augustus showed that such athletic games were perfectly acceptable alternatives to the more traditional Western games. He famously attended the *Sebasta* in Naples shortly before he died.³ In AD 86, Domitian even introduced a permanent *agon* in Rome, the Capitoline games.⁴

Even without imperial presence, games could be used to send out ideological messages. The exotic animals and ethnic stereotypes in the *munera* sent a strong message of power because they visualized the extent of the Empire. *Ludi* were often organized on imperial feast days (to celebrate a birthday, an anniversary of the reign, or a military triumph). In the eastern Mediterranean, emperors were more likely to celebrate an important event with an *agon*. Augustus, for example, celebrated his triumph at Actium with the construction of

2 For the emperor at the games see Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 157–192. A brief summary of this relation in Francesca Garello, “Circenses. Sports as a Vehicle of Popular Consensus and Control of the Masses in Imperial Rome,” in *La comune eredità dello sport in Europa. Atti del 1° Seminario Europeo di Storia dello Sport*, eds. Arnd Krüger and Angela Teja (Rome, 1997), pp. 100–106.

3 Suetonius, *Augustus* 98.5; Velleius Paterculus 2.123.1. The *Sebasta* in Naples were not instituted by Augustus. According to Cassius Dio 55.10.9, the people of Naples wanted to honor their emperor to thank him for his financial help after an earthquake.

4 Nero had already attempted the same, but the *Neroneia* ended with his *damnatio memoriae*. The evidence for the *Neroneia* and the *Kapitolia* is collected in Maria Letizia Caldelli, *L'Agon Capitolinus. Storia e protagonisti dall' istituzione domiziana al IV secolo* (Rome, 1993), pp. 37–43, 53–90. See also Louis Robert, “Deux concours grecs à Rome,” *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* (1970), pp. 6–27 for the *agones* introduced in Rome in the third century.

the victory town Nikopolis and the institution of a quadrennial *agon*, the *Aktia*.⁵ Although this contest is exceptional – normally emperors had only a reactive role in the institution of games, which was driven by cities – the link with the imperial power is not. The inclusion in the Roman Empire in fact stimulated the growth of the agonistic circuit⁶ – there were never more *agones* than in the second and third centuries AD. Cities instrumentalized their local feasts to reach out to the emperor in many ways. In practically all cases, they asked the court for permission. This not only had practical advantages – it gave the financial arrangements greater legal protection and removed all discussion whether the games had ‘sacred’ status – but also improved the relation between emperor and city. In the third century AD, when along the endangered borders of the Empire the emperors needed all the support they could get they were particularly generous with their permissions of high status games.⁷ Many of the new contests proposed by the cities were, moreover, named after the emperor and held in his honor rather than or besides that of a traditional god. Even *agones* named after local benefactors or traditional deities, honored the reigning emperor with pictures in the procession. In this way, the cities could combine a strong sense of local civic pride with the expression of loyalty to the Roman emperor.⁸ On the level of the provincial *koina*, where local traditions were less embedded, the imperial cult was often combined with Roman-style games. Gladiatorial games, often in combination with *venationes*, are therefore relatively well-attested in the eastern part of the Empire in the first three centuries AD. Like the *agones*, they were promoted by the local elites and not intro-

- 5 Suetonius, *Augustus* 18.2; Strabo 7.7.6. Another example is Septimius Severus’ involvement in the *Olympia Severeia* at Kodrigai in Cilicia, which celebrated his victory over Pescennius Niger. Cf. Ruprecht Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige und kaiserliche Politik: Studien zum Festwesen in Ostkilikien im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Düsseldorf, 1985), pp. 22–25, 33–34 and 75–85.
- 6 Onno van Nijf, “Local heroes: athletics, festivals and elite self-fashioning in the Roman East,” in *Being Greek under Rome. Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), pp. 306–334, esp. pp. 314–320.
- 7 This has been shown especially by Ruprecht Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige*, pp. 67–119 and Christian Wallner, *Soldatenkaiser und Sport*, Grazer Altertumskundliche Studien 4 (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), esp. p. 231. More general ideas about the emperors and the *agones* were published by Tony Spawforth, “*Kapoteleia Olympia: Roman Emperors and Greek Agones*,” in *Pindar’s Poetry, Patrons, and Festivals from Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire*, eds. Simon Hornblower and Catherine Morgan (Oxford, 2007), pp. 377–390.
- 8 Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 2000), pp. 95–98. More general discussion in Zahra Newby, *Greek Athletics in the Roman World. Victory and Virtue* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 1–14.

duced under government pressure⁹. A final, and more specific, way in which games contributed to an identification of the Greek-speaking population with the Roman Empire, is by the award of Roman citizenship. Competing on the agonistic circuit, or more precisely winning a Greek-style contest in Rome, was indeed one of the best attested ways of receiving Roman citizenship before the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. All the victors of the *Kapitolia* received the *tria nomina* of the reigning emperor.¹⁰ Participation in certain *agones* could therefore, just like the organization of *agones*, be a way of becoming Roman while staying Greek.

This brief summary of the political role of games – a topic that has been intensively studied over the last decades – shows that both Greek-style and Roman-style games contributed to the political unity of the early Empire. It hides from our view, however, that games they did not contribute to cultural unity in the Roman Empire of the first three centuries AD. Despite a modest level of interaction, which made athletics fashionable in the Roman West and led to the introduction of *agones* in several western cities with a large Philhellenic population (Rome, Naples, Puteoli, Vienne (briefly), Marseilles and Nîmes (for artists), Cherchell and Carthage)¹¹ and to the organization of gladiatorial games during the feasts of the eastern provincial *koina*, East and West remained largely separate cultural realms with respect to games. This paper aims to bring often understated cultural differences to the center of attention: until the fourth century, the local set of games still dominated and determined the taste and perceptions of people, which affected, among other things, the status of the participants, the identification and interaction of the spectators with the participants, and the (self-)representation of the participants. I will

- 9 Michael J. Carter, "Romanization through Spectacle in the Greek East," in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, eds. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (Malden and Oxford), pp. 619–621. Christian Mann, "*Um keinen Kranz, um das Leben kämpfen wir!*" *Gladiatoren im Osten des römischen Reiches und die Frage der Romanisierung* (Berlin, 2011), pp. 54–57, 64–67. For a graph of the proportion of agonistic festivals, gladiatorial games and *venationes* in Asia Minor see Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence*, p. 88.
- 10 See Peter Herz, "Seltsame Kaisergentilizien. Beobachtungen zur kaiserzeitlichen Nomenklatur," in *Fremde Zeiten. Festschrift für Jürgen Borchhardt*, eds. Fritz Blakolmer e.a. (Wien, 1996), pp. 253–259.
- 11 For the fashionable character of athletics in the West see Newby, *Greek Athletics in the Roman World*, esp. pp. 134–140. For the main sources and discussions on the western *agones* see Sofie Remijnsen, *The End of Greek Athletics* (Cambridge, Eng., 2015), pp. 129–163.

argue that a real unification of the entertainment sector, including the spread of similar perceptions of games in East and West, took place only in the fourth century AD, when the political unity started to disappear.

A Meeting with a Third-Century Athlete

In order to efficiently explore differences in perception, this section takes as protagonist a fictional average citizen with, however, more than average means, from a city in the Greek-speaking part of the Roman Empire of the early third century AD – let us call him Apollonios. We imagine a particular occasion, in which Apollonios went to see an *agon* in his own city. While sitting in the stadium he recognized several of the competitors. Some he knew only by name. If the *agon* he attended was a top contest, some of the competitors would indeed have been world-famous. Not all of them would have been, however, certainly not if the *agon* did not enjoy sacred status, or in the competitions for youngsters. The contest Apollonios watched on this particular occasion was an *agon* with a mostly local catchment area. Two of the boys competing were Apollonios' nephews; a third was the son of a good friend. One of the victors in the men's competition was the man who used to defeat Apollonios when they were training together in the *ephebate* – the voluntary citizen training with a strong athletic focus that was well-established in the Hellenistic and Roman period. Because Apollonios, who like most of his peers had only an average talent for athletics, had spent a considerable part of his youth training in the gymnasium, he could recognize the technical quality of even the more subtle moves of the wrestlers or pankratiasts. He could calculate who was winning the pentathlon before the herald had proclaimed the victor. He could even imagine that, if he had just had a little more talent and better trainer in his early youth, it would have been him in the ring. By now, however, Apollonios had grown too old for that, so instead he paid special attention to the young man who came first in the *diaulos* – the second cousin of a good friend who currently officiated as gymnasiarch. The young man would make a good match for his daughter. His accomplishments showed that he had admirable self-control and discipline, and a healthy ambition to excel. Apollonios would happily link his own family to the glory of the young man's victories. These victories were, moreover, bound to ensure the athlete a seat in the city council and interesting tax privileges. Apollonios had high hopes for him.

Though Apollonios and his candidate son-in-law¹² are entirely fictitious, the situation sketched is not. In the eastern part of the Roman Empire, athletics formed a considerable part of the education of that section of the urban population that could afford to invest in the cultural capital of their children. Athletic teachers for young boys were available in most gymnasia and in most cities teenage citizens-to-be (those who could be spared at home) would likewise be registered in the ephebate. The lack of a direct purpose behind this training, beyond health, was occasionally observed, but did not make it invaluable, for the athletic training ingrained highly valued attitudes such as a love of hard work (*philoponia*) or a keenness to be honored as the best (*philotimia*) in the next generation.¹³ That one required free time and money to engage in it moreover confirmed the elite status of those who did indeed engage in it. Men of the higher layers of society thus usually had personal experiences in the sports in which the athletes competed at the *agones*.¹⁴ Most competitors on the agonistic circuit came from among their midst and enjoyed a high status in society.¹⁵ Although criticism of professional athletes was uttered in intellectual circles,¹⁶ it was equally normal to associate athletes with virtues. The most famous example is Dio's praise of Melankomas:

- 12 The son-in-law is introduced because in modern sociological studies the willingness to include a performer in one's family is used as a reliable criterion for the status and perception of performers, cf. Karin van Nieuwkerk, *"A Trade like Any Other": Female Singers and Dancers in Egypt* (Austin, Tex., 1995), pp. 187–192.
- 13 At ephebic competitions in the Hellenistic period there were special prizes for the young men who were most accomplished in showing perfect form (εὐεξία), an exertion-loving attitude (φιλοπονία), and the best behavior (εὐταξία, later εὐκοσμία). Cf. Nigel B. Crowther, "Euexia, eutaxia, philoponia: Three contests of the Greek gymnasium," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 85 (1991), 301–304. The competitive format, with which the ephebes' moral as well as athletic qualities were measured, stimulated individual ambition.
- 14 On the role of athletic education for the elite in the Roman East see in particular Onno van Nijf, "Athletics and *Paideia*: Festivals and Physical Education in the World of the Second Sophistic," in *Paideia: The World Of The Second Sophistic*, ed. Barbara E. Borg (Berlin – New York 2004), pp. 203–227.
- 15 See especially Henri W. Pleket, "Zur Soziologie des antiken Sports," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 36 (1974), 57–87, and more recently, Onno van Nijf, "Local heroes," pp. 321–329.
- 16 Objections to gluttony: e.g. Euripides, *Autolycus* Fr. 282, 4–6; Athenaeus 10.412 d-f; Galen, *Protrepticus* 11; Clement, *Paedagogus* 3.10; Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 23. Objections to the uselessness of athletics: e.g. Tyrtaeus, Fr. 12, 1–16; Lucian, *Anacharsis* 31; Xenophanes, Fr. 2 (from Athenaeus 10.413); Euripides, *Autolycus* Fr. 282, 16–28; Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 1–2; Origin, *Contra Celsum* 5.42.

He had the good fortune to be from an illustrious family and to have beauty, and moreover courage, strength and self-control, things that are truly the greatest of blessings. Indeed the most admirable thing in a man is not only to be unconquered by one's opponents, but also by toil, heat, hunger and libido.¹⁷

These ideas were widespread; also Pseudo-Dionysius, the author of a rhetorical handbook from the third or fourth century, observes that athletes became famous champions through self-control, self-discipline and training (ἀπὸ σωφροσύνης, ἀπὸ ἐγκρατείας, ἀπὸ ἀσκήσεως).¹⁸

In his home town, a victor of a sacred contest was awarded with exemptions from several types of taxes, in particular liturgies, and was offered honorary seats in public events and a place on the city council. Victors of sacred and eiselastic contests (the most prestigious category of *agones*) even received considerable monthly pensions from their home cities. Other cities might offer them honorary citizenship or even an honorary seat in the city council.¹⁹ The athletes' personal networks increased their pull in society even more: they were active members of the local elite and, through the international athletic synod,²⁰ even came into contact with the highest authorities.

Apollonios' western counterpart would have had a completely different experience when looking at an *agon*. His personal network would probably not have included any of the competitors, nor would he have wanted to include them. A western member of the elite may have had some personal experience with training in the gymnasium – as this became fashionable in the Roman baths in the second century – but he did not practice this in front of a public and certainly he did not think of this as a career. As Cornelius Nepos observed, whereas it was a great honor in Greece to be proclaimed Olympic victor, in

¹⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 28.12.

¹⁸ Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ars rhetorica* 7.292 (in volume 6 of the Teubner edition of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Stuttgart 1965).

¹⁹ The main sources on these privileges have been collected in Peter Frisch, *Zehn agonistische Papyri*, *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 13 (Opladen, 1986). This collection does not include the papyri applying for the monthly pensions, however. For these see esp. *SPP* v 54–56, 69–70 and 74 (*SPP Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde*, ed. C. Wessely. Leipzig 1901–1924).

²⁰ For this association see Henri W. Pleket, "Some aspects of the history of the athletic guilds," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 10 (1973), 197–227 and Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics*, pp. 230–249.

Rome such an achievement would be deemed unrespectable.²¹ Even when *agones* spread to the West, the participants continued to originate from the eastern half of the Empire.²²

The reason why well-off-citizens socialized in the West did not want to make a career as an athlete is that in the western mindset people continued to think about athletic contests in the terms of a public performance.²³ The act of performing was surrounded by suspicion: people who made a living out of creating a false or staged reality could not be trusted.²⁴ Performing was hence seen as an immoral act, as problematic as other types of immoral acts and crimes. The law thus put the performers on one line with prostitutes, criminals, and other kinds of offenders. These were all disadvantaged by the legal state of *infamia*. This limitation of citizen rights implied that they were not protected from corporal punishment, could not lay an accusation in a public court, could not become members of city councils, and could not contract legal marriages.²⁵ The participants of the *agones* were legally exempted from the burden of *infamia*,²⁶ but since the *agones* represented only a small number of all the games on offer in the western half of the Empire, this did not change widespread ideas. A good indication that the western perception of *agones* did not put the contest central, but the public nature of the activity, is the Latin umbrella term for what we call 'games': *spectacula* or 'shows'. This is, for example, the word Suetonius uses in the Lives of the Caesars to cover all the games listed

21 Cornelius Nepos, *Praefatio* 5: Magnis in laudibus tota fere fuit Graecia victorem Olympiae citari, in scaenam vero prodire ac populo esse spectaculo nemini in eisdem gentibus fuit turpitudini. Quae omnia apud nos partim infamia, partim humilia atque ab honestate remota ponuntur.

22 See, for example, Maria Letizia Caldelli, *L'Agon Capitolinus*, pp. 90–92, on the participants of the *Kapitolia* in Rome.

23 See also Plutarch, *Roman Questions* 273 on the Roman suspicion of athletics, in which he explains that the Romans did take over the habit of oiling the body and exercising naked, but especially in the private sphere of the home because this did not represent an error.

24 Cf. Jack Goody's anthropological model of the ambivalence of performance: *Representations and Contradictions: Ambivalence towards Images, Theatre, Fiction, Relics and Sexuality* (Oxford and Malden, Mass., 1997), especially pp. 103–104, where he applies his theory to Roman actors.

25 Catharine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), pp. 123–26; Hartmut Leppin, "Between marginality and celebrity: Entertainers and entertainments in Roman society," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Relations in the Roman World*, ed. Michael Peachin (Oxford, 2011), pp. 671–672.

26 *Dig.* 3.2.4.pr.

by an emperor.²⁷ This category of 'show' was later taken over by western Christians, as is illustrated by the title and structure of the first Christian polemic against games: Tertullian's *De spectaculis* discusses circus games, theater plays, amphitheater events, and *agones*.

The Greek equivalent of the Latin word *spectaculum* is θέα. This term was not, however, used for *agones*, which were therefore not considered 'shows'.²⁸ Within Greek culture, the defining feature of the *agon* was its competitive character, not the fact that it was also eagerly viewed by a crowd. The spread of gladiator shows did not change this. Since for every amphitheater event, the public could watch dozens of *agones*, the foreign newcomer did not challenge the existing model of what 'games' were. People in the Greek-speaking East did not create an umbrella term such as 'games'. All mental categories are based on distinctions that are meaningful only within a certain cultural framework. The sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel expressed this as follows in his standard work on categorization processes: "Discernible only through society's mental glasses, islands of meaning are invisible to anyone not wearing them."²⁹ In the East, one was used to think in terms of contests, not in terms of public-oriented shows.

Several non-agonistic performers benefited from the positive perception of competition in the eastern Mediterranean. Here, gladiators were not burdened by associations with infamy. Often, they were compared to athletes: some of the best gladiators received multiple citizenships after they were freed, just like athletes did after victories, and the formulas on the funerary epitaphs of gladiators were inspired by the agonistic ideology. Gladiators never rose as high as athletes – the organizational procedure was taken over from the West, including the recruitment from slaves and men in financial need – but they were more respected than their colleagues in the West.³⁰ Mimes and pantomimes, which in the West enjoyed an extremely ambivalent status, were in the third century allowed to compete in several *agones*. For them, victories and the

27 See, for example, Suetonius, *Augustus* 43–44, on the *spectacula* organized by Augustus. He mentions actors, gladiators, *venationes*, athletic contests, a staged naval battle, and circus games.

28 Jean-Yves Strasser, "Études sur les concours d'Occident," *Nikephoros* 14 (2001), 112–13.

29 Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Fine Line. Making Distinctions in Everyday Life* (Chicago and London, 1991), p. 81.

30 Louis Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'orient grec* (Amsterdam, 1971), p. 263; Christian Mann, *Gladiatoren im Osten*, pp. 109; 156–74.

concomitant privileges, such as honorary citizenship, tax exemptions, etc., opened the way to upward social mobility.³¹

Watching Athletic Contests in the Fourth Century

In AD 383 or 384 Libanius, then about seventy years old, devoted a speech (*Oratio* 10) to the Plethron, a large palaestra-like structure (a *plethron* is 30m.) built by Didius Julianus in the center of Antioch to accommodate the preliminary combat matches of the local Olympic games. In the month preceding the games, the athletes who wanted to participate trained and competed here together under the eye of the Olympic umpires so that the best could be selected to compete in the actual contest in the stadium of suburban Daphne. The nearby *xystos* (a covered running track) probably housed the running events.³² Originally, the candidate-competitors had fought on the wrestling ground of the Plethron under the eyes of only a few spectators, as at first the Plethron had only two rows of seats. In the mid-fourth century, however, the president of the Olympics, a notable called Argyrios, wanted to make his presidency more memorable with a benefaction and doubled the number of seats. In the sphere of competitive display, Libanius' uncle Phasganios wished to outdo his predecessor and added four more rows to the four then in existence. In the 380s Proklos too, who was *comes Orientis* when Libanius wrote this speech, wanted to bring luster to his office with a benefaction that would please the crowd, and decided to donate even more seats.

Libanius used his rhetorical skills to protest against this plan. The extra seats could only have negative effects. They would be taken up by schoolboys, workmen, and idlers, who shouted loudly with every move of the athletes. Their disorderly and licentious behavior would disturb the solemn atmosphere of the Olympics and could perhaps even lead to riots in the city.

It is not clear to what extent the atmosphere during these matches actually changed in the course of the fourth century. The idealized past with just two rows of seats was only experienced by Libanius as a child, when – according to

31 Ruth Webb, *Demons and Dancers. Performance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2008), pp. 25–35. For the ambivalent position of pantomimes see also Ismene Lada-Richards, *Silent Eloquence. Lucian and Pantomime Dancing* (London, 2007).

32 For the history of this building see Malalas 12.16, ed. Iohannis Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*. Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 31 (Berlin, 2000). For the preliminary events see Libanius, *Ep.* 1183: *κάν τοῖς προάγωνιν ἐν ἄστει κἀν τοῖς μείζουσιν ἐν Δάφνῃ*. John Chrysostom, *In principium actorum* (PG 51) 76: *μετὰ γὰρ τὰς τριάκοντα ἡμέρας τὰς ἐνταῦθα ἀναγαγόντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ προάσκειον περιάγουσι*.

this speech – only the trainers and patrons of the athletes were there to watch, not schoolboys such as himself. Though obviously a smaller crowd made less noise, it is unlikely that the matches in the combat sports – indisputably the most popular athletic events throughout the imperial period – were ever watched in a solemn manner. It was always normal for spectators to support one athlete more than the other and to react emotionally to the moves they made in the course of the match.³³ What was new, however, was the lack of technical knowledge among even the upper-class part of the public.

In the first half of the fourth century, the ephebate disappeared. Dating this evolution more precisely is difficult: because of changes in the epigraphic habit, the inscribed lists of ephebes, which form the best evidence for the ephebate in the Roman Empire, already disappear in the later third century. Some disparate pieces of evidence suggest that several cities still had an ephebate in the early fourth century, but by the middle of the century the sources are completely silent.³⁴ The abandonment of this educational institution did probably not result from a formal decision of various city councils, as the city did not have a major role in the organization of the ephebate in the imperial period. Most offices were either filled by ephebes themselves or by older family members. Therefore, the disappearance of the ephebate implies a loss of public support for the institution that aimed to educate local citizens through a program focused on athletic training and participation in local feasts.³⁵ A diminishing public support for training in the gymnasium is also reflected by the renovations of palastras, which became less suitable for intensive sports with the re-

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- 33 Polybius 27.9 offers a nice example of the public siding with the underdog in the third century BC. Cf. Garrett G. Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena. Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 189–229 on the psychological reaction of people watching sport and its applicability on Antiquity.
- 34 Menander Rhetor 396, ed. D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford, 1981). He writes in the late 3rd or early 4th c. that a young man should recall the shared exercises in the palaistra when making a speech seeing off a friend. According to Libanius, *Or.* 1.23 the whipping contest in Sparta, which was connected to the local ephebate, still existed circa 330. P.Oxy. I 42 attests a local ephebic competition in Oxyrhynchus in 323. The last evidence for the ephebate is a *kosmetes* (the official responsible for the ephebate in Egypt) in P.Ant. I 31, a document of 347 from Antinoopolis.
- 35 Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, “Von der Bürgerschule zum aristokratischen Klub? Die athenische Ephebie in der römischen Kaiserzeit,” *Chiron* 41 (2011), 487–537, esp. pp. 510–15 and 518–28. His argumentation sometimes confounds the disappearance of evidence with a disappearance of practices. His view that an education that socialized the youth as local citizens was no longer in demand is convincing, however.

moval of water basins and the addition of pavements.³⁶ Athletics did not disappear completely as an elite activity – the idea that this was indecent only became dominant in the later fifth or even sixth century³⁷ – but it did become less common.

The second, and more striking change, is the shift in moral discourse. The idea that the reaction of the crowd was a bad thing was not a *topos* in earlier moralist literature, at least not in the East. The traditional moral criticism on professional athletics focused on the lifestyle of the competitors: they were considered gluttons who did not contribute to society in any meaningful way.³⁸ The presence of the crowd and its behavior was never questioned. That Libanius argues against the treatment of the Antiochene Olympics as a spectacle shows that he, like his contemporaries, had internalized the category of ‘shows’. Whereas the conservative Libanius did not agree with this categorization, many of his contemporaries do seem to have used this category in an inclusive way. Basil puts pankratiasts on one line with mimes and *venatores*.³⁹ John Chrysostom uses the term θέατρον for the entire range of shows: acting, horse racing, athletics, acrobats, etc.⁴⁰ In many examples such as these, it is unclear whether the athletes meant are circus performers or competitors of *agones*, but Palladius unambiguously describes the Antiochene Olympics as θέα τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων.⁴¹

With the new category of ‘show’ came a strong focus on the spectators. Not unlike Libanius, Basil explained that the disgusting noise and shouting of the crowd were a reason why potential sponsors should not pay for the shows of pankratiasts, mimes, or *venatores*. John Chrysostom repeatedly warns for the immorality of performers, not for their personal lifestyle, but for the impact on

36 Fikret Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1992), pp. 307–313; Martin Steskal, “Bemerkungen zur Funktion der Palästren in den Ephesischen Bad-Gymnasium-Komplexen,” *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien* 72 (2003), 227–39, esp. pp. 234–37.

37 The participants of the Antiochene Olympics were well-to-do individuals until the end of these games in 520. See Malalas 12.10. Procopius, *De Bellis* 1.13.29–38 identifies a bath attendant of the general as an athletics trainer from Constantinople. According to Suidas, s.v. Μένανδρος this Menander undressed to exercise in the palaistra in the 570s, but later repented this indecency.

38 Cf. n. 16.

39 Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia in illud: Destruam horrea mea* 3. Ed. Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile: Homélie sur la richesse* (Paris, 1935).

40 Christoph Jacob, *Das geistige Theater: Ästhetik und Moral bei Johannes Chrysostomus* (Münster, 2010), p. 27.

41 *Dialogus de vita Joannis Chrysostomi* (SC 341) 16.104.

the public of the stories they staged.⁴² Many more moralizing authors argued that shows caused all kinds of illicit behavior (brawls, licentious sexual behavior, gambling, etc.), especially in Christian works.⁴³ The difference between Christian and pagan moral criticisms should not be overstated, however; the major difference is in tone, not in argumentation. Obviously, Christian authors were stricter; they generally pleaded for complete abstinence from games. The tone of the extremely topical discourse was set by Tertullian at a time when the animal sacrifices at the games left no room for a milder view, and in the heresy-obsessed world of the fourth century it was hardly safe to publish a far milder view than the traditional one.

The reason why many people in the later fourth century saw athletic competitions as a kind of 'show' has little to do with Christianization and cannot be entirely explained by the lack of personal experience with athletics among large parts of the spectators either. Foremost, it indicates that the *agon* was no longer the model for understanding games. Around the second quarter of the century, the *agones* lost their dominant position among games in the East. Christianization is not a major factor in this process, as animal sacrifices were no longer executed at the *agones* at this point and there is enough evidence for Christian involvement in games in the later fourth century. The difficulties on the agonistic circuit were a side effect of the centralization of power in the East. The decrease in political initiative on the city level and the partial confiscations of city possessions created obstacles for the strongly city-driven organizational procedures of the games.⁴⁴ While *agones* in provincial capitals were saved by the active engagement of high officials – such as the aforementioned *comes Orientis* – in smaller cities athletic contests disappeared. In the later fourth century, the circuit of *agones* on which professional competitors traveled still existed,⁴⁵ but it was far smaller than it had been a century before. The development of government structures in the East also led to the construction of circuses adjacent to tetrarchal palaces (e.g. at Nikomedia, Thessaloniki, or

42 Christop Jacob, *Das geistige Theater*, pp. 90–91. Cf. Blake Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives: John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley, Cal. and Los Angeles, 2001), p. 43: "On the most basic level, John indicts the theater for its falsity, for pretending to be what is not."

43 See e.g. Werner Weismann, *Kirche und Schauspiele: Die Schauspiele im Urteil der lateinischen Kirchenväter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustin* (Würzburg, 1972), pp. 69–122.

44 This process as explained in detail in Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics*, pp. 289–320. For the removal of the sacrifices see pp. 184–187.

45 CIL VI 10154 (367–375), l. 3–5: *Filumenum in omni aelhetico certamine ab Oriente ad Occidente(m) usq(ue) victorem.*

eventually at Constantinople), which in turn stimulated a fashion for circus games, first in the imperial residences and soon after in the surrounding cities.⁴⁶

Circus games were not just chariot races. In fact, they offered various types of entertainers the opportunity to perform. Fifth and sixth-century circus programs from Egypt⁴⁷ show that in between the chariot races all kinds of shows were put on: mimes, small *venationes*, acrobats, and even athletic contests – no gladiators, however, these lost popularity in the fourth century and disappeared completely in the early fifth. Extra entertainments in the circus are likewise attested in earlier sources. Ammianus Marcellinus for example describes how in the early 350s Gallus was absorbed in seven simultaneous boxing matches in the circus.⁴⁸ With the circus games came thus a mix-and-match format for games. Half of the so-called ‘circus programs’ on papyrus do not even mention horse races,⁴⁹ but give a selection of various other entertainments – like the modern circus. Unlike the *agones*, to which free men with higher than average means traveled large distances in order to compete voluntarily, with no guaranteed winnings, these shows worked with hired performers.

In the later fourth century, athletes therefore competed on one of two circuits.⁵⁰ Those who had the means to hire private trainers, to travel independently over large distances, and to become members of the influential but exclusive international athletic association, continued to compete in the *agones*. People with the physical build for athletics, but not the financial means, could make a living – or often just a little on the side – by performing in shows of the kind sketched above. Though these athletes are underrepresented in the sources – as all members of the lower classes – they would, by the end of the fourth century, have been the most common type. From a story of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* it can be deduced that these circus athletes cooperated in troops.⁵¹ In this short story, a magistrate is saved by God from dying in a shipwreck; he shares this ship with a group of *pammacharii* who were, like him, traveling from Tyre to Constantinople – two major cities with a circus and

46 Discussion of the tetrarchical circuses in John H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (Los Angeles 1986), pp. 633–638.

47 P.Oxy. XXXIV 2707, P. Bingen 128, P.Oxy. LXXIX 5216.

48 Ammianus Marcellinus 14.7.3.

49 P.Harrauer 56, P.Oxy. LXXIX 5215, 5217.

50 For a more extensive discussion of these two circuits see Sofie Remijsen, *The End of Greek Athletics*, pp. 220–230.

51 *Apophthegmata* 39, ed. François Nau, “Histoire des solitaires égyptiens,” *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 12 (1907), 171–181.

hence ample opportunities to get hired. *Pammacharii* were athletes specialized in *pammachon*, a more free-style combat sport that got included at certain *agones* from about AD 300 onward.⁵² It is remarkable that a whole group of athletes travelling together had the same specialty. For athletes on the agonistic circuit, it would have been a disadvantage to consistently attend the same competitions as one's direct competitors, for the same one or two would always win. On the circus circuit, however, this was an advantage, as circus directors would be more likely to hire an established troop. In the huge infrastructure directors liked to set up several matches simultaneously, as in Ammianus Marcellinus' passage with seven boxing matches. In this way one insured visibility at the various ends of the circus. In closely cooperating groups, the athletes had, moreover, in-depth knowledge of all their colleagues' tricks and weaknesses and could use this knowledge to present a more appealing show. Not all matches between two contestants, both fighting for the victory crown, were equally interesting for the public. Though a close-fought match with unexpected turns in fate could be very exciting, a match in which little happened, an unequal match in which the better athlete beat the beginner knock-out within a minute or two, or a match relying mainly on intricate defensive skills could not enthuse the spectators to the same extent. Contestants who knew each other and did not need to win in order to get their wages could avoid such situations.

The only certain depictions of circus athletes, relief scenes on a bronze vase connected by an inscription along the neck to the Green circus faction,⁵³ confirm that the style of fighting of circus athletes included various theatrical gestures. The vase shows several matches, mostly figuring the successful pankratiast Privatulus. More interesting is the behavior of the losers: they allowed Privatulus to make a big show of his victory – and of their defeat. In one scene, the triumphant victor put his foot on the stretched-out body of the loser, who was kind enough to remain flat on the ground. In the next, Privatulus held the loser by his neck and his behind, and threw him like a sack of flour – which would be practically impossible without cooperation of the victim. It is impossible to say whether these matches were manipulated to the same extent as for

52 For this sport see Sofie Remijsen, "Pammachon: A new sport," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 47 (2010), 185–204.

53 Published in Dietrich O.A. Klose and Thomas Klein, "Werbung für den Wettkampf in spätantiker Zeit: Die Bronzevasse des Privatulus aus archäologischer und philologischer Sicht," in *Der gymnische Agon in der Spätantike*, eds. Andreas Gutsfeld and Stephan Lehmann (Gutenberg, 2013), pp. 143–50.

example American pro wrestling⁵⁴, but this certainly seems a better analogy than modern Olympic wrestling. The performance of these athletes was hence more adopted to the new spectacle culture than the traditional *agones*, where even the since long unpopular pentathlon remained on the program.⁵⁵

Looking at Athletes in the Fourth Century

When in the later fourth century another fictional Apollonios, a descendant of our earlier protagonist, saw a man engaged in a wrestling match, he had a different experience from his ancestor. He may have had some difficulty becoming absorbed by the match: he did not know the rules and techniques of the sport from personal experience, so it was hard to make out who was winning, if the athletes did not slightly overact the situation. It also made it difficult for Apollonios to identify with the men. Nor was it immediately clear what he had to make of them: were they two of these infamous performers from insignificant families who wrestled to make a living or were they instead conservative aristocrats who had followed intensive private training? Without cloths such things were hard to see. Only the context of the match could enlighten him. If after the match, one of the athletes turned out to be interested in marrying Apollonios' daughter, the circus athlete would be mocked for such a pretentious thought. He could not even legally marry, for he fell under the restrictions of *infamia*. When the competitor of an *agon* asked him the same question, Apollonios was flattered, however. That young man talked as if he had received an outstanding literary education – perhaps at the school of Libanios⁵⁶ – and several members of his family had held high offices in the imperial administration. Perhaps Apollonios' brother, an abbot in a nearby monastery, would advise against the match, however. With a career devoted to an artificially muscular body and to constantly outdoing others, the young man surely was terribly vain.

54 Very interesting in this respect is Barthes' essay on 'catch', the French variation on pro wrestling, and in particular when he discusses the role-playing of the contestants and over-acting of defeat: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957), pp. 11–28.

55 A victory list on bronze plate from Olympia attests fourth-century sprinting specialists and a pentathlon victor of 381. Cf. Joachim Ebert, "Zur neuen Bronzeplatte mit Siegerinschriften aus Olympia (Inv. 1148)," *Nikephoros* 10 (1997), 217–33.

56 In *Epistulae* 1278 and 1279, Libanios discusses two brothers who took part in the Antiochene Olympics. He praises them as well for their enthusiasm for rhetoric, which must be the context in which Libanios encountered them.

From the later fourth century on, the textual and even visual sources on competitors in the *agones* are characterized by a struggle to distinguish them from lower-class performers. In the field of self-representation, the competitors had lost several important tools in comparison with their predecessors. Victors still enjoyed prestigious privileges, but Diocletian had limited some of these to athletes who had won at least three sacred contests, one of which had to be in Greece or Rome.⁵⁷ This limited the value of a single 'sacred victory'. In the late third century, honorary monuments for members of the local elite moreover disappeared, as a result of changes in the political culture. Athletic victors were among the victims: they were no longer awarded statues in the city center. Changes in the value-set were not to their advantage either: the choice for an ascetic lifestyle – which denied the body rather than developing it – found wide public support from the third century on.⁵⁸ Also the Christian value of humility was in obvious contradiction with the passion for winning contests.⁵⁹ Passages such as Malalas 12.10, in which he describes the competitors of the Antiochene Olympics explicitly as very wealthy – they brought gold and slaves – and moreover as chaste, suggests that the late-antique author could not expect his readers to find this self-evident. Fourth-century anecdotes show that athletes were often suspected of negative actions, such as black magic. Libanius describes for example in his autobiography how his enemy Festus tried to harm him about 365 with the help of a certain Martyrius, whom Festus thought to be a sorcerer because of his attachment to wrestlers. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, in Rome the wrestler Asbolius was similarly accused of poisoning in 369–370.⁶⁰

A good illustration of the attempts of the competitors to keep their group 'clean' is a long and detailed agonistic metaphor in John Cassian's *Institutions* (SC 109) 5.12.⁶¹ After having spent the larger part of his life in the eastern Mediterranean, John Cassian founded a monastery in Marseille circa 415. The *Institutions* (written circa 420) discuss the ideal organization of a monastery. The passage of interest to us is a long commentary on a famous agonistic metaphor by Paul: "An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules"

57 *Cod. Iust.* 10.54.1; P. Lips. I 44.

58 Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), e.g. pp. 191–192, 202. See also James A. Francis, *Subversive Virtue. Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, Pa., 1995), who focuses on pagan asceticism and on social acceptability.

59 Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* 1.10, which describes the ambition to win contests as a sin.

60 Libanius, *Or.* 1.156–159; Ammianus Marcellinus 28.1.8.

61 Discussion and commentary of some agonistic details in Alois Koch, "Unbekannte Details der antiken Agonistik?," *Nikephoros* 20 (2007), 209–211.

(2 Tim 2:5). In order to explain the validity of Paul's saying, John Cassian elaborated the image further, adding many details on the selection of athletes, which he must have known from his youth and longer residencies in cities in the eastern Mediterranean. He wrote that, before being allowed to compete, three aspects of a candidate's life were carefully examined: it had to be established that no aspect of his life was defiled by *infamia* and that he was not a slave and he had to prove his technique and strength. Athletes had to start competing as boys and, before competing as an adult in the top games, should have proven to be at least equal to other athletes, preferably by having beaten them at other games. The exclusion of slaves had always been a rule at the *agones* and was hence not specifically directed against circus athletes.⁶² The track record the candidates needed to present did enforce an extra barrier. Most obviously directed against circus athletes was the exclusion of persons marked by the legal status of *infamia*. This affected everyone who made an exhibition of himself in front of a public and who contended or acted for gain.⁶³ This definition included circus athletes (who contended for gain in front of a public), but not the competitors of the sacred contests, who had long been exempted.⁶⁴ For the exclusion of circus athletes from *agones*, the juristic reasoning was reversed: *infamia* was no longer only a consequence of performing, it was also a ground for exclusion.⁶⁵ In order to avoid association with performers, the well-to-do athletes made sure they would never compete against them. No dignity could be gained from defeating them, but being defeated by them would be twice as shameful. Like Libanius, the competitors of the agonistic circuit fought against the tendency to categorize *agones* as spectacles.

62 See e.g. Artemidorus, *Onirocriticon* 1.62.

63 *Dig.* 3.2.2.5: Ait praetor: "Qui in scaenam prodierit, infamis est". Scaena est, ut Labeo definit, quae ludorum faciendorum causa quolibet loco, ubi quis consistat moveaturque spectaculum sui praebiturus, posita sit in publico privatove vel in vico, quo tamen loco passim homines spectaculi causa admittantur. Eos enim, qui quaestus causa in certamina descendunt et omnes propter praemium in scaenam prodeuntes famosos esse pegasus et nerva filius responderunt.

64 *Dig.* 3.2.4.pr: Athletas autem Sabinus et Cassius responderunt omnino artem ludicram non facere: virtutis enim gratia hoc facere. Et generaliter ita omnes opinantur et utile videtur, ut neque thymelici neque xystici neque agitadores nec qui aquam equis spargunt ceteraque eorum ministeria, qui certaminibus sacris deserviunt, ignominiosi habeantur.

65 Whereas scholarship on Greek athletics in the 1980 strongly focused on disconnecting it from the notion of amateurism from the later 19th and early 20th century – esp. David C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago, 1984) – for late antiquity the analogy actually works.

On mosaics, the tendency to actively dissociate the participants of the *agones* from athletic performances may be reflected in the fashion for depicting these athletes by themselves – either full-figure or (usually) only the busts – within a decorative frame that separated them from others.⁶⁶ The date of most mosaics is disputed, but one of the most representative examples of this genre – a mosaic with athletic busts from Aquileia – can certainly dated after AD 348 on the basis of numismatic evidence embedded in the mortar. When individual athletes are depicted within frames, the emphasis lies on the fame and victor status of the athlete. This is the exact opposite of the theatrical staging of defeat on the bronze vase discussed before.

A Romanization of Games?

This study described how, by the later fourth century, games in both the western and eastern half of the Empire were organized according to the Roman model, which allowed the organizer to flexibly mix and match shows according to taste, opportunity, and occasion. The incorporation of athletics in the Roman-style games even led to the Latinization of athletic terms in Greek. The specialists of the late-antique Greek sport *pammachon* were called *pammacharii*, with a Latin suffix. The life of Saint Theodore of Sykeon records an anecdote in which the saint, visiting Constantinople in the reign of Mauricius (582–602), healed a wrestler who was possessed by an evil spirit. This athlete with a traditional Greek specialty is described, in a Greek text, with the Latin term *λουκτάτωρ* (*luctator*).⁶⁷ From the later fourth century on, games were widely perceived through the Roman cognitive category of ‘show’ or *spectaculum*. The unified spectacle landscape of the fourth century was therefore essentially a Roman one. This leads to the question of how this process of cultural unification fits into the Romanization debate.

As has been aptly explained by Kaldellis⁶⁸, the identity of many people in the late-antique eastern Roman Empire was composed of three main constitu-

66 Anke Böhne, *Bilder vom Sport: Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie römischer Athleten-Darstellungen*, Nikephoros Beihefte 19 (Hildesheim, 2011), K1 (Aquileia), K23, K51, K55, K56, K61, K85b, and K100.

67 *Vita Theodori Syceotae* 88, ed. André-Jean Festugière, *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon* (Brussels, 1970).

68 Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), pp. 1–187, esp. pp. 1–6 and 42–119 (a detailed discussion of how people in the late-antique East presented themselves as Romans).

tive elements. They could at the same time have a sense of being Greek, of being Roman, and of being Christian. As noted in the introduction, feeling Greek was not really in contrast with an adherence to the Roman Empire, rather on the contrary, the former could enforce the latter. In the intellectual discourse of the imperial period, however, Greek identity was more prominent. In the course of the fourth century, this emphasis shifted. Until then, people in the Greek East never actually called themselves Romans, but in the fourth century they started to identify themselves as Romans, and by the early Byzantine period, they generally did so. This change is linked to administrative changes, as well as to new and more negative meanings of the word 'Greek' (Ἕλλην).

From the Severan period onwards, people in the East became more actively engaged in the government and administration of the Empire, and more and more eastern notables were elevated to high ranks. With the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, every free man had moreover officially become a Roman citizen, carrying a Roman *nomen*. All fell under Roman law, which was, with some delay, increasingly applied. The emperors moreover started to spend more time in the East. In the late third century, the influence of eastern provincials in the Empire increased even more because of the growing state apparatus with the reorganization by Diocletian. At the same time, Christianity was spreading rapidly. In this context Ἕλλην became a synonym for 'pagan' and, consequently, being 'Greek' became a charged notion. From the fourth century on, it was gradually relegated to the domain of elite culture, where traditional *paideia* was still appreciated and Greekness could thus still play a positive role.

We should ask, therefore, in how far the adaptation of Roman practices and views with respect to athletics and games in general is related to this growing readiness to define oneself as a Roman rather than a Greek. Social customs such as going to the public baths or to the games could function as identity markers. One could also wash or exercise at home or – if one had the money – even look at performers in a private context. Visiting public gymnasia and games, however, were regular public activities that integrated a person in the community.⁶⁹ Being seen doing these activities was as essential as doing them. This made them potential identity markers, but what identity did they mark? When a 'Greek' stopped with his intensive training in the palaestra in favor of more leisurely activities in the baths and started enjoying athletic competitions as shows rather than as contests, did this make him feel more 'Roman'? This would not only require that he realized that these practices were

69 Cf. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, p. 4 on the importance of bathing practices for the integration in Roman culture.

typical of Greek and Roman culture – whereas it is easy to argue that practicing athletics was a recognizably ‘Greek’ activity, leisurely enjoyment of the bath or watching ‘spectacles’ were too similar to common practices in the East, and spread too gradually, to be recognized as distinctly ‘Roman’⁷⁰ – it also presumes that these cultural origins directed people’s behavior. ‘Romanization’ is a concept with a complex history and shifting meaning, but it generally implies a conscious process of cultural change, directed by an awareness of differences between the Roman and the preexisting culture⁷¹.

Interesting theoretical research on ethnicity and identity has in the last decade been done by Rogers Brubaker. One of his major points is that ‘groups’ are never stable; the sense of belonging to a certain group is activated only by circumstances. He therefore prefers the variable ‘groupness’ over the constant ‘groups’ as an analytical category. People have a plurality of identities that can be activated in a given situation, but not all are activated in everyday life.⁷² People in the ancient world may, in specific situations, have ascribed to the groups of the Romans or the Greeks or to both, but in everyday life this identity did not necessarily matter. Social affiliations are often given preference to memberships of ethnic, political or religious groups.⁷³ The groupness that is activated by many social practices, which we can study through ancient sources, is membership of the elite. As has been pointed out by scholars focusing on the ‘self-romanization’ of local elites, the reason why some people in the provinces copy certain Roman objects, buildings, or practices is often their elite

70 The most telling source for this is Lucian’s *Anacharsis*, in which the Skythian sage discusses as an outsider the respect for athletics in Athens with Solon. Jason König, *Athletics and Literature in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Eng., 2005), pp. 46–47, 80–96 discusses this dialogue in detail. Bardesanes Edessenus, *The Book of the Laws of Countries* 599 even takes athletics as the most characteristic feature of the Greeks. For this Syriac text, see the edition by H.J.Willem Drijvers, *The Book of the Laws of Countries: Dialogue on Fate of Bardaisan of Edessa* (Assen, 1964). For the gradual change in bathing practices, see Fikret Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, pp. 250–256 (on the large complexes combining Roman baths with Greek gymnasia, developed in the first century AD) and pp. 307–313 (on the gradual disappearance of the palaestra).

71 A clear and brief summary of the debate in Christian Mann, *Gladiatoren im Osten*, pp. 16–23.

72 Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*. (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2004), esp. pp. 1–65.

73 Éric Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 2012), p. 74. Cf. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, pp. 44–45 on the importance of self-understanding and social location for individual and collective action.

character.⁷⁴ Acculturation processes in the East are far more complicated than those in the West, because Greek culture had in the many areas where it was not indigenous the same elite connotation. Because athletics was a typical elite practice, it could in the East be instrumentalized for constructing a Greek as well as a Roman identity, but people engaged in it (as participant or organizer) foremost because it ingrained them in the elite.⁷⁵

The unification of the Roman spectacle landscape in the fourth century was not caused by a preference of the 'Roman' over the 'Greek' tradition. As Greg Woolf already pointed out, people in the East did not frequently construct their 'Greek' identity on the basis of customs such as bathing or watching games, but instead focused on language or history.⁷⁶ The tetrarchs built circuses next to palaces, because they knew that these would give them a strong instrument for imperial propaganda. Although the format was different, the sports and arts practiced on stage were not unlike what the people were used to, and for that reason they rapidly spread, not because the new games were more 'Roman'. At a time when the city-driven organization of the *agones* was curbed by the centralization of power, the new format was above all more flexible. The intrusion of a 'Roman' way of thinking about games was an unintended consequence of the new political structures of the fourth century, which, as Inglebert points out in the opening chapter of this book, were indeed an important factor in the unification of East and West in the fourth century. The 'Roman' origin can be perceived by us, but it is not made explicit in our few sources and was probably not recognized as such by many people in the fourth century. In late antiquity, attitudes to spectacles are in fact only discussed with the aim of identity construction in the context of Christian sermons, where the abstinence from games is promoted as part of a distinctively Christian identity.⁷⁷ The acculturation process in the field of games is therefore neither cause nor consequence of the development of a more prominent Roman identity. If

74 E.g. Ramsay MacMullen, "Notes on Romanization," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 21 (1984), 175–177.

75 See, for example, the work of Onno van Nijf: "Athletics and *Paideia*" (cf. n. 14) and "Athletics, *Andreia* and the *Askêsis*-Culture in the Roman East", *Andreia. Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity*, eds. Ralph M. Rosen and Ineke Sluiter (Leiden, 2003), pp. 263–286.

76 Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994), 116–143, esp. 125–130.

77 Katryn Mammel, "Ancient Critics of Roman Spectacle and Sport," in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, eds. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (Malden and Oxford), pp. 612–613.

one would call this unconscious adaptation of Roman practices Romanization, it is Romanization 'by default': the Greek competitions declined by themselves and the Roman games just happened to be an available alternative. With the eventual disappearance of the *agones*, the eastern 'Romans' did lose, however, one of the last practices on the basis of which they could – if they wanted – construct a Greek identity.

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Eunuchs in the East, Men in the West? Dis/unity, Gender and Orientalism in the Fourth Century

Shaun Tougher

Introduction

In the narrative of relations between East and West in the Roman Empire in the fourth century AD, the tensions between the eastern and western imperial courts at the end of the century loom large. The decision of Theodosius I to “split” the empire between his young sons Arcadius and Honorius (the teenage Arcadius in the east and the ten-year-old Honorius in the west) ushered in a period of intense hostility and competition between the courts, famously focused on the figure of Stilicho.¹ Stilicho, half-Vandal general and son-in-law of Theodosius I (Stilicho was married to Serena, Theodosius’ niece and adopted daughter), had been left as guardian of Honorius, but claimed guardianship of Arcadius too and concomitant authority over the east. In the political manoeuvrings which followed the death of Theodosius I in 395, Stilicho was branded a public enemy by the eastern court. In the war of words between east and west a key figure was the (probably Alexandrian) poet Claudian, who acted as a ‘propagandist’ (through panegyric and invective) for the western court, or rather Stilicho. Famously, Claudian wrote invectives on leading officials at the eastern court, namely Rufinus the praetorian prefect and Eutropius, the grand chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*), who was a eunuch. It is Claudian’s two attacks on Eutropius that are the inspiration and central focus of this paper which will examine the significance of the figure of the eunuch for the topic of the end of unity between east and west in the Roman Empire.

Eunuchs became an institutional feature of the imperial court in the late Roman period.² This phenomenon was especially associated with the east, an

- 1 For recent treatment of Stilicho see Natalie Kampen, *Family Fictions in Roman Art* (Cambridge, Eng., 2009), pp. 123–38.
- 2 See for instance Keith Hopkins, “Eunuchs in Politics in the Later Roman Empire,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 189 (1963), 62–80, slightly revised in his *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge, Eng., 1978), pp. 172–96; Peter Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Stuttgart, 1980), pp. 130–76; and Shaun Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (London and New York, 2008), pp. 36–53.

association Claudian dwells on in his invectives on Eutropius. I will examine how Claudian presents Eutropius and how he utilises the eunuch to emphasise the contrast between east and west. In Greek and Roman writing there was a long history of deploying the figure of the eunuch (whose gender, as a castrated male, was ambiguous) as a marker and symbol of the feminine and effeminate east as opposed to the 'normal' masculine west. I will consider the roots of such orientalist discourse, but also consider its validity. I will ask, to what extent were court eunuchs an eastern phenomenon, and whether we see an end to unity between east and west in the matter of the nature of the imperial courts in relation to the use of eunuchs. I will argue that the situation is more complicated than the simple contrast Claudian creates, and that continuity of practice across both parts of the empire persisted beyond the fourth century. The orientalist discourse needs to be recognised, addressed and corrected, for modern historians themselves can compound its potency; in his inaugural lecture, on Claudian, Oswald Dilke summed up parts of the invectives on Eutropius as follows:

The so-called patrician has been nothing but a pander and a punkah-walla, who fanned an empress with peacock's feathers ... Statues of this Pooh-Bah appear all over Constantinople, as judge, as consul, even as general, one of them dominating the senate-house.³

He adds later orientalist imagery to an already heady mix. Eunuchs were not just an eastern phenomenon, though it was easy to brand them as such. In reality they were a defining feature of Roman culture.

Claudian and Eutropius

The figures of Claudian and Eutropius, and their role in the history of the Roman Empire at the end of the fourth century, are well known. Claudian was the subject of a major monograph by Alan Cameron published in 1970.⁴ More recently, he has received scrutiny from Catherine Ware in her *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition*.⁵ The significance of the poet for court politics and

3 Oswald Ashton Wentworth Dilke, *Claudian: Poet of Declining Empire and Morals; An Inaugural Lecture* (Leeds, 1969), p. 14.

4 Alan Cameron, *Claudian. Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970).

5 Catherine Ware, *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition* (Cambridge, Eng., 2012). For other recent work on Claudian see for instance Marie-France Guipponi-Gineste, *Claudian. Poète du monde à la cour d'Occident* (Paris, 2010); Florence Garambois-Vasquez, *Les invectives de Claudian. Une poétique de la violence* (Brussels, 2007).

culture of the late fourth and early fifth centuries is not in doubt, given his prolific output of panegyric and invective; he was also celebrated in his own day, a statue of him being erected in Rome in the Forum of Trajan, in the names of Arcadius and Honorius.⁶

As for Eutropius, he was a product of the trade in eunuch slaves and rose to become the leading minister of Arcadius, though he had served Theodosius I too (undertaking for him a mission to Egypt).⁷ He was Arcadius' grand chamberlain, and replaced Rufinus as the emperor's right hand man in 395. The political importance of the eunuch – and Stilicho – is strikingly conveyed by a fragment of the lost history of their contemporary Eunapius, which reflects on the difficulty of acquiring good information about affairs in the west in “the time of Eutropius”. Eunapius observes:

If any officials or soldiers had access to information on political activity, they related it as they wished, biased by friendship or hostility or a desire to please someone. And if you brought together three or four of them with conflicting versions as witnesses, there would be a great argument which would proceed from passionate and heated interjections to a pitched battle. They would say, ‘Where did you get this from?’ ‘Where did Stilicho see you?’ ‘Would you have seen the eunuch?’ so that it was quite a task to sort out the tangle.⁸

Eutropius' pre-eminence is also reflected by the number of statues and other images of him that were produced, and by his appointment as consul for 399.⁹ The usefulness of Eutropius as an example of the powerful court eunuchs who characterise later Roman and Byzantine history means that he has featured heavily in modern discussions of the phenomenon, such as studies by James Dunlap and Helga Scholten.¹⁰

6 CIL VI.1710. The inscription identifies Claudian as a *vir clarissimus*, tribune and notary.

7 For Eutropius see for instance PLRE 2, Eutropius 1, pp. 440–44; James E. Dunlap, “The Office of the Grand Chamberlain in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires,” in *Two Studies in Later Roman and Byzantine Administration* (New York and London, 1924), pp. 161–324, esp. pp. 272–84.

8 Eunapius, *History*, Fragment 66.2, trans. Roger Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, 2 (Liverpool, 1983), p. 103.

9 For statues and images of Eutropius see Claudian, *In Eutropium* 2.72–77, and *Codex Theodosianus* 9.40.17.

10 Dunlap, “Grand Chamberlain”; Helga Scholten, *Der Eunuch in Kaisernähe: zur politischen und sozialen Bedeutung des praepositus sacri cubiculi im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Frankfurt, 1995).

The duo of Claudian and Eutropius are nicely brought together, of course, because Claudian wrote two invectives on the eunuch.¹¹ The first was elicited by the designation of Eutropius as consul for 399, and the second completed following the eunuch's sudden fall and exile to Cyprus in the same year. These texts are certainly not neglected by historians and classicists for they reveal much about the career of Eutropius, concepts of the gender identity of eunuchs, and the political and literary context of the time; they are, for instance, the focus of Jacqueline Long's wonderfully subtitled *Claudian's In Eutropium. Or, How, When, and Why to Slander a Eunuch* (Chapel Hill and London, 1996).¹² Such is the importance of these texts for East-West relations and concepts that they deserve a place in this volume.

In his invectives on Eutropius Claudian dwells heavily on the gender identity of the eunuch, presenting him in a range of guises: as woman, as man, and as other – a third gender.¹³ The image of Eutropius as a woman appears at the very start of the first invective, Claudian exclaiming “O shame to heaven and earth! Our cities behold an old woman (*anus*) decked in a consul's robe who gives a woman's name to the year” (1.9–10), and he begs “at least give us a man (*virum*)” (1.29).¹⁴ Eutropius' military role provides Claudian with ammunition for his assault. He asserts:

Mars blushed, Bellona scoffed and turned her from the disgrace of the East whene'er with arrows strung and flashing quiver the aged Amazon practises battles or hurries back as arbiter of peace and war to hold parley with the Getae. Our enemies rejoiced at the sight and felt that at last we were lacking in *men* (*viros*) (1.238–43).

Claudian declares that Eutropius should not have intruded on the male arena of warfare, but busied himself with the female craft of spinning

11 For an edition and translation see Maurice Platnauer, *Claudian*, 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1922), pp. 138–229.

12 See also the commentary (and German translation) by Helge Schweckendiek, *Claudians Invektive gegen Eutrop* (In Eutropium). *Ein Kommentar* (Hildesheim, 1992). There are also important observations in Alan Cameron, “Notes on Claudian's Invectives,” *Classical Quarterly* 18 (1968), 387–411, esp. 399–411, and his *Claudian*, pp. 124–55.

13 See for instance Shaun Tougher, “Two Views on the Gender Identity of Byzantine Eunuchs,” in *Changing Sex and Bending Gender*, eds. Alison Shaw and Shirley Ardener (New York and Oxford, 2005), pp. 60–73.

14 Translations are those of Maurice Platnauer for the Loeb Classical Library. Although archaic in style, the translation has elegance and impact.

(1.274).¹⁵ Eutropius' acting as a man is also reflected by Claudian characterising the eunuch as the father of the emperor Arcadius (2.50). Especially striking though, Claudian identifies Eutropius as neither man nor woman, and has Roma describe eunuchs as an "Unhappy band...whom the male sex has discarded and the female will not adopt" (*infelix turba...alter quos pepulit sexus nec suscipit alter*) (1.466–7).

The invectives also make great play with issues of east and west, and the different identities of east and west. This raises issues of gender too, for the west is characterised as masculine and manly, and the east as feminine and effeminate. This gender agenda is of course well served by the figure of the eunuch as it is so much associated with the east. Claudian ascribes the invention of eunuchs to the Assyrian queen Semiramis (in order to disguise her sex by surrounding herself with womanly men) (1.339–42). He also notes that it was Parthian custom to castrate boys prior to puberty "to serve their lusts by thus lengthening the years of youthful charm" (1.342–5). When Roma speaks in the first invective – on hearing the news of Eutropius' consulship she flies to the camp of Honorius where with Stilicho the emperor is receiving Germans who had come to conclude a peace (1.371–80) – she acknowledges that eunuchs are part of Rome now but that they originated in the east; she confesses she has "long learned to tolerate" the "genus" of eunuchs, "ever since the court exalted itself with Arsacid pomp and the example of Parthia corrupted our morals" (1.414–16). The eastern practice of eunuchising boys (as well as Eutropius' eastern origin) is stressed by the fact that Eutropius was castrated by an Armenian (1.47) and put up for sale in Assyrian markets (1.58).

The contrast between east and west is emphasised by Roma when she speaks to Honorius. Lauding the military success of the west and lamenting the situation in the east, she remarks that the east, unlike the west, is used to having women as rulers, and thus can accept eunuchs as governors. She exclaims: "why disfigure warlike Italy with the general brand and defile her austere peoples with their deadly profligacy? Drive this foreign pollution (*peregrina piacula*) out of Latium, "suffer not this thing of shame to cross the Alps; let it remain fixed in the country of its birth" (1.427–33). The contrast between the effeminate east and the manly west is also stressed by Roma when she asserts that eunuchs "now despise the fan and aspire to the consul's cloak. No longer do they carry the maidenly parasol for they have dared to wield the axes of Latium" (1.463–5). (Interestingly, Claudian compounds the eastern

15 The idea of the appropriateness of a eunuch engaged in the female task of spinning also surfaces in the case of Narses, the famous sixth-century grand chamberlain and general: see below.

effeminacy versus western manliness imagery by tapping into the religious identity of eunuchs too, not just their identity as eastern court officials, as the infamous *galli*, the supposedly self-castrating devotees of the Great Mother, the goddess Cybele, whose cult had been imported from Asia into Rome in 204 BC¹⁶) Elsewhere, however, Claudian remarks on the unusualness of the position of Eutropius, even in the east. He declares (1.296–7) “no country has ever had a eunuch for a consul or judge or general”, and

Had a woman assumed the fasces, though this were illegal it were nevertheless less disgraceful. Women bear sway among the Medes and swift Sabaeans: half barbarity (*barbariae*) is governed by martial queens. We know of no people who endure a eunuch’s rule (1.320–324).¹⁷

It is also noteworthy that Claudian – in relation to Eutropius selling governorships of the eastern provinces – recalls great moments in the Roman conquest

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- 16 Claudian asserts that Eutropius should be a devotee of Cybele rather than Mars (1.277). Thus Claudian also taps into a long tradition of hostile Roman rhetoric concerning the *galli*: on this see for instance Shaun Tougher, “The Aesthetics of Castration: The Beauty of Roman Eunuchs,” in *Castration and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Larissa Tracy (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 48–72, esp. pp. 51–6. Interestingly Cybele also features in the second invective, as an appropriate commentator on affairs in Phrygia: 2.279–303.
- 17 Ignoring (or perhaps simply ignorant of) such figures as Hermias the tyrant of Atarneus and the Attalid dynast Philetaerus (just as his point that there are female deities but no eunuch deities ignores Attis: 1.326). For these cases see for instance Guyot, *Eunuchen*, pp. 207–209 and 219–20. This assertion that eunuch rulers are unheard of even in the east echoes the remarks ascribed to the satrap Orxines about Bagoas the eunuch of Alexander the Great, in Quintus Curtius Rufus’ *History of Alexander* 10.1.37, “I had heard that women once were rulers in Asia but this really is something new – a eunuch as king!”, trans. John Yardley, *Quintus Curtius Rufus, The History of Alexander* (London, 2004), p. 240. Mary Renault, *The Nature of Alexander* (London, 1975), p. 197, notes the ridiculousness of this remark given recent Persian history, for another eunuch, also called Bagoas, had held sway. For Renault’s depiction of Bagoas in the second novel of her *Alexander the Great* trilogy, see for instance Shaun Tougher, “The Renault Bagoas: The Treatment of Alexander the Great’s Eunuch in Mary Renault’s *The Persian Boy*,” *New Voices in Classical Reception Studies* 3 (2008), 77–89. For Quintus Curtius Rufus and his history of Alexander (the only Latin history of Alexander, dating to the first century AD – either the reign of Claudius or Vespasian) see Elizabeth Baynham, *Alexander the Great: The Unique History of Quintus Curtius Rufus* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1998). Curtius’ history is meant to speak to a Roman audience about imperial rule, and the role of the eunuch informs this subject: see also Tougher, “The Aesthetics of Castration,” pp. 67–9.

of the east, emphasising that Rome in the west had claim to the eastern territories. He asks:

Did Attalus make you, Rome, his heir, was Antiochus confined within the appointed bounds of Taurus, did Servilius enjoy a triumph over the hitherto unconquered Isaurians, did Egypt fall before Augustus, and Crete before Metellus, to ensure Eutropius a sufficient income? Cilicia, Judaea, Sophene, all Rome's labours and Pompey's triumphs, are there to sell (1.215–221).

Ultimately Roma urges Stilicho to military action, to conquer Eutropius; she asks: "Why, Stilicho, dost thou delay to conquer because ashamed to fight [against a eunuch]?" (1.500–501).

Turning to the second invective, although it was completed after the exile of Eutropius, it still engages with notions of east and west, and urges the prospect of the salvation of the east by Stilicho. Claudian announces in his preface that the eunuch has been rejected by both parts of the empire, observing that he was never of the west (*Hesperius*) but is now repudiated too by the east (*Eous*) (2, Preface 35–36). In the body of the invective Claudian then relates the divine plan to deal with the problem of the east when Eutropius was still in power: Mars addresses Bellona, declaring:

'Sister, shall we never succeed in curing the East of effeminacy (*molitiae*)? Will this corrupt age never learn true manliness (*rigescent*)¹⁸... The year that has known no war has had a eunuch for its consul. The consulship would have been at an end had a like spirit animated Italy (*Hesperius*); this age-long office had fallen amid mockery and no traces been left of its trampled rights, had not Stilicho, heedful of the empire and of the character and morals of a past age, banished from Tiber's city this shameful name and kept Rome unsullied by an unheard of crime. He has given us a harbour to which the exiled majesty of Latium and the disgraced fasces might retire; he has given us annals wherein, abandoning the East (*Oriente*), an age polluted with servile stains might find a refuge' (2.112–32).

Bellona is then despatched to rouse barbarians (Gruthungi) against the east (i.e. Tarbigilus' revolt in Phrygia in 399).

Claudian contrasts the effeminate eastern army under the general Leo with that of Stilicho, which

18 Thus harden, lose softness.

endured under arms the frosts of Thrace and were wont to winter in the open air and break with their axes the frozen waters of Hebrus for a draught. Changed is the leader and changed their character. Byzantium's luxury and Ancyra's pomp have destroyed their vigour (2.411–416).

Stilicho is held up as the potential saviour of the east (2.501 onwards). Claudian declares: "To him they look as to a star amid this universal shipwreck of war; to him innocent and guilty alike address their prayers" (507–8). Aurora, the goddess of the dawn, acts: "Thereupon suppliant Aurora turned her flight towards powerful Italy" (2.526–7) and goes to Stilicho. She clutches his "victorious hand" (*manum victricem*) (2.532). The remainder of the second invective is her appeal to Stilicho. She asks, why does he only care for Italy (Hesperiam), although he was once her "guide and ... leader" (2.535–6) (emphasising Stilicho's previous presence in the east prior to his departure to the west with Theodosius I in 394, to put down Eugenius). She blames Rufinus for the rupture of the two empires, a division maintained by Eutropius. "The world had begun to form one single empire under the rule of the two brothers" (*fraterno coniungi coeperat orbis imperio*), she says – but Eutropius prevented this (so unity is presented as Stilicho's goal) – and exclaims "In thee is now my only hope" (*In te iam spes una mihi*) (2.591).¹⁹ She begs:

do not condemn all for the fault of a few ... I seek not to draw thee away from Italy; thou art enough defence for both empires. Let both have the benefit of thine illustrious arms; let the same shield defend us and one hero work the salvation of a twofold world (2.599–602).

Thus, Claudian is not positing a permanent rupture of east and west; rather he conjures up a temporary state of affairs, caused by the influence of Rufinus and Eutropius. In the first invective he asked Eutropius: "Why seek to divide the two empires and embroil loving brothers in strife?" (1.281–2); and Roma desired the unity of the empire, complaining that "The discordant East (*discors Oriens*) envies our prosperity, and beneath that other sky (*alio Phoebi*), lo! wickedness flourishes to prevent our empire's breathing in harmony with one body" (1.398). The ultimate goal is the reunification of east and west, under Stilicho, though on his terms, of course.

19 This brings to mind irresistibly Princess Leia's appeal to Obi-Wan Kenobi (via hologram) in *Star Wars* (1977): "Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope."

Claudian and Roman Orientalism

However, it is the subject of eunuchs that is the key focus of my analysis, and Claudian is famously not alone in identifying them as an aspect of imperial rule in the fourth century; for instance, it is well known that both Ammianus Marcellinus and the *Historia Augusta* are less than happy about the power and influence that eunuchs could exert with emperors.²⁰ Both Ammianus and the authors of the *Historia Augusta* also associate the invention and use of eunuchs with the near east. Like Claudian, Ammianus attributes the first creation of eunuchs to the Assyrian queen Semiramis (14.6.17). The *Historia Augusta*, noting that Severus Alexander did not employ eunuchs in council or as ministers, remarks:

[T]hese creatures alone cause the downfall of emperors, for they wish them to live in the manner of foreign nations or as the kings of the Persians, and keep them well removed from the people and from their friends, and they are go-betweens, often delivering messages other than the emperor's reply, hedging him about, and aiming, above all things, to keep knowledge from him.²¹

However, Claudian's remarks are more specific, for they place eunuchs in the context of conflict between east and west within the Roman empire. A better parallel that quickly comes to mind is that of Augustan propaganda relating to his conflict with Antony and the Hellenistic queen Cleopatra VII.²² In his *Life of Antony*, Plutarch appears to reflect such propaganda, asserting

Octavius Caesar ... had a decree passed declaring war on Cleopatra and depriving Antony of the authority which he had allowed a woman to exercise in his place. Octavius Caesar also gave it out that Antony had allowed himself to fall under the influence of drugs, that he was no longer

20 See for instance Shaun Tougher, "Ammianus and the Eunuchs," in *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, eds. David Hunt and Jan Willem Drijvers (London and New York, 1999), pp. 64–73; Alan Cameron, "Eunuchs in the *Historia Augusta*," *Latomus* 24 (1965), 155–8.

21 *Historia Augusta* 18.66.3–4, trans. David Magie, *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 2 (London, 1924), p. 311.

22 Ware, *Claudian*, p. 76 n. 41, comments "While Romans had always viewed the East as decadent and effeminate, Lucan – and later Claudian – here relied on specifically anti-Egyptian prejudice encouraged in the propaganda of Augustus: on Cleopatra, for example, *Aen.* 8.685–8; *Hor. Carm.* 1.37."

responsible for his actions, and that the Romans were fighting this war against Mardian the eunuch, Potheinus, Iras, who was Cleopatra's hair-dresser, and Charmian, her waiting-woman, since it was they who were mainly responsible for the direction of affairs.²³

Significantly, Claudian himself appears to have the case of Egypt in mind. As already noted, he refers to the fall of Egypt to Augustus. He also has Roma recall the case of the Ptolemaic eunuch Potheinus, who was responsible for the death of Pompey the Great, and has her identify Eutropius as a new Potheinus: Roma exclaims

The slaves of Egypt's kings [lit. "the Ptolemies"] have ever been a curse to the world; behold I suffer from a worse than Pothinus and bear a wrong more flagrant than that of which Egypt was once the scene. Pothinus' sword at Alexandria spilled the blood of a single consul; Eutropius brings dishonour on us all (1.480–484).

Thus Eutropius is compared with Potheinus, but is also declared to be far worse than him.

The example of Potheinus also points to a specific literary model for Claudian, as Catherine Ware has indicated: Lucan's *De bello civili*. She remarks

That Eutropius was a eunuch no doubt prompted Claudian to describe him as a more villainous Pothinus...In Lucan's *De bello civili* Pothinus features as the evil counsellor of the young Ptolemy, responsible for the death of Pompey...In [a] brief allusion to Lucan [8.536–8], Claudian prefigures the eunuch's evil grasp of power, the feebleness of the young emperor, and the readiness of his court to commit crimes against Rome ... By suggesting that Eutropius is a latter-day Pothinus, Claudian implied that the East, ruled by Pothinus/Eutropius, has turned away from the Roman *mos maiorum*.²⁴

23 Plutarch, *Life of Antony* 60, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, *Plutarch, Makers of Rome* (Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 326.

24 Ware, *Claudian*, pp. 75–6. Lucan 10.133–5 also refers to the presence of eunuchs at Cleopatra's court: "There too were hapless boys who had lost their manhood by the knife; and opposite them stood youths, whose cheeks, in spite of their age, were scarce darkened by any down" ("Nec non infelix ferro mollita iuventus/ atque exsecta virum: stat contra fortior aetas/vix ulla fuscante tamen languine malas"), trans. J.D. Duff, *Lucan* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1928), p. 601. Dilke, *Claudian*, p. 11, also points to the debt of Claudian's invectives to Lucan.

It is perhaps telling too that Claudian names one of the lovers of Eutropius as a certain Ptolemy;²⁵ it is certainly intriguing that Ammianus also appeals to the example of the death of Pompey, asserting that he was “butchered in Egypt to give the eunuchs pleasure” (14.11.32).²⁶

Court Eunuchs before 395

In relation to assessing dis/unity between east and west in the fourth century it is vital also to consider the reality of the eunuch presence in the Roman Empire in this period. Regarding the use of eunuchs at the imperial court before 399, as noted above, Roma acknowledges that eunuchs had become part of the Roman world

ever since the court exalted itself with Arsacid pomp and the example of Parthia corrupted our morals. But till now they were but set to guard jewels and raiment, and to secure silence for the imperial slumber. Never beyond the sleeping-chamber did the eunuch's service pass; not their lives gave guarantee of loyalty but their dull wits were a sure pledge. Let them guard store of pearls and Tyrian-dyed vestments; they must quit high offices of state (1.414–423).

The precise date of the institutionalisation of court eunuchs in the Roman empire is debated, though often associated with the figure of Diocletian and his supposed transformation of imperial style. The first well-documented case of a powerful court eunuch, however, is that of Eusebius, the grand chamberlain of Constantius II, and the main forerunner of Eutropius. He is presented by several sources – but most famously Ammianus – as the controller of Constantius, as the real power at the heart of the empire.²⁷ Such was Eusebius' significance that some sources even confuse Eusebius of Nicomedia, the “Arian”

25 As Long, *Claudian's In Eutropium*, p. 124, remarks. See also the comments of Schweckendiek, *Claudians Invektive gegen Eutrop*, p. 107.

26 Trans. John C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 109. The observation is made in a series of examples to show the fickleness of Fortune, in relation to the death of the *Caesar* Gallus (whose fall and death the grand chamberlain Eusebius and other eunuchs were implicated in). The death of Pompey at the hands of a eunuch seems to have been a familiar example in late antiquity of the fickleness of Fortune: Ambrose in his formal reply to Symmachus' famous appeal for the restoration of the altar of Victory also utilises it (*Ep.* 73.35).

27 See for instance Tougher, *Eunuch*, pp. 36–7.

bishop so influential with Constantine and Constantius II (not to mention Licinius and his wife Constantia), with him.²⁸ It is important to appreciate that the eunuch Eusebius was active in both eastern and western parts of the empire, and also that both Constantius' *Caesares*, Gallus and Julian, had grand chamberlains too, Gorgonius and Eutherius respectively.²⁹ The case of Eutherius is especially instructive when considering issues of east and west. Commenting on Eutherius' background and career, Ammianus remarks:

He was born in Armenia of free parents, but when still very young he was kidnapped by hostile tribesman in that neighbourhood, who gelded him and sold him to some Roman traders, who brought him to Constantine's palace (*ad palatium Constantini*). There, as he grew up, he gradually gave evidence of virtuous living and intelligence ... And if the emperor Constans had listened to him in times past, when Eutherius had grown up and was already mature, and urged honourable and upright conduct upon him, he would have been guilty of no faults, or at least only pardonable ones (16.7.5).³⁰

Thus not only had Eutherius begun his career under Constantine, but Constans had been served by the eunuch – in the western empire. It is interesting to consider what activities Eutherius was engaged in, between the murder of Constans in 350 and the appointment of Julian as *Caesar* in Gaul in 355. Presumably, he joined the court of Constantius in the west when the emperor made his way there, perhaps entering the service of Constantina before the arrival of her brother.

Thus Claudian's attempts to present eunuchs purely as low-level and dim domestic staff, and as alien to the west, are (unsurprisingly) disingenuous, to say the least (despite the efforts of the emperors Julian and Magnus Maximus).³¹ Further, one can also make the case that it was the consumption of eunuchs as luxury slaves in Rome by the imperial court from its very beginnings (and probably by the elite prior to the advent of Augustus) that created the eventual institutionalisation of court eunuchs, rather than Persia simply

28 See for example David Hunt, "Did Constantius II have 'Court Bishops'?", *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 86–90, esp. 87.

29 For Gorgonius see Amm. Marc. 15.2.10.

30 Trans. Rolfe, *Ammianus*, pp. 227–9.

31 Both these emperors seem to have been keen to curtail the role of eunuchs at the imperial court: see for example Tougher, *Eunuch*, pp. 39–40.

being suddenly copied. In effect, the development started in Rome itself, albeit under Hellenistic influence.³²

Court Eunuchs after 399

It is also instructive to look beyond the case of Eutropius to consider the presence of eunuchs in the west after 399. They evidently remained a consistent and significant feature of the court, as seen in the examples of Terentius the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* of Honorius, and Acolius the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* of Valentinian III.³³ It is telling that court eunuchs continued to be utilised in Italy under Theoderic the Ostrogoth, witness the funerary inscription commemorating the eunuch chamberlain Seda.³⁴

However, I will conclude this chapter by looking even further ahead into the sixth century, to consider the case of Narses, as this makes an intriguing contrast with the case of Eutropius. Narses, a eunuch from Persarmenia, is famous as the vanquisher of the Ostrogoths, having been sent by Justinian I in Constantinople to take command of the campaign in Italy in 551, despite having served in the traditional roles of chamberlain and treasurer.³⁵ For the latter stages of Narses' career and life in Italy, where he had become *de facto* ruler as Justinian's leading official there, we are primarily dependent on a variety of western sources, such as Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, the *Book of Pontiffs*, and Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards*. It is well known that in accounts of the Lombard invasion of Italy in 568 Narses is implicated in bringing this about by summoning the Lombards in. One might then expect the western sources to trot out all the old clichés about eunuchs and the east, but they are more nuanced than that, and can seem to feel some sympathy for the eunuch. The *Book of Pontiffs* praises Narses for his defeat of Sindual king of the Heruli and Amingus dux of the Franks, asserting that "the whole of Italy was

32 See for example Tougher, "The Aesthetics of Castration," pp. 69–70; Walter Stevenson, "The Rise of Eunuchs in Greco-Roman Antiquity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995), 495–511. See further Shaun Tougher, *Roman Castrati: Eunuchs in the Roman Empire* (forthcoming).

33 For Terentius see Zosimus 5.37.4–6. For Acolius see PLRE 2, Ac(h)olius, p. 6. For eunuchs in the western Roman empire in the fifth century see for instance Tougher, *Eunuch*, p. 42.

34 PLRE 2, Seda, p. 987. The inscription, at Ravenna, reads: "Hic requiescit in pace vir s[u]bl[im]is Seda ignucus et cubicularius regis Theoderici" (CIL 11, 64 no. 310).

35 For Narses see for instance PLRE 3B, Narses 1, pp. 912–28; Dunlap, "Grand Chamberlain," pp. 284–99; Lawrence Fauber, *Narses: Hammer of the Goths* (New York and Gloucester, 1990).

glad.”³⁶ However, it then relates that the Romans “driven by malice” complained to Justin II and Sophia (who had become rulers after the death of Justinian in 565) that Narses treated them like slaves, and asked that he be recalled or they would go over to the “barbarians”.³⁷ Discovering what had occurred Narses declared “If I have maltreated the Romans let me suffer evil,” left Rome for Campania and “wrote to the Lombard nation to come and occupy Italy”. The seventh-century chronicle of Fredegar contains an expanded version of the story (4.65), asserting that it was because Narses was terrified by the threats of Justin and Sophia that he summoned the Lombards into Italy.³⁸ Sophia had instructed that a golden spindle should be made for him, since he was a eunuch and should rule over slaves not peoples; Narses remarks “I shall spin a thread of which neither the emperor Justin nor the empress can find the end”. Paul the Deacon, writing in the eighth century, includes a further elaborated narrative (2.5).³⁹ Once again Narses is the victim of the Romans, who are said to have envied him despite all his labours. The imperial response is more fully described. The emperor Justin II is reported to have been very angry with Narses and to have despatched Longinus⁴⁰ to replace him, and the empress Sophia is said to have sent him a threatening message, addressing the fact that he was a eunuch: she said “that she would make him portion out to the girls in the women’s chamber the daily tasks of wool.”⁴¹ Narses is reputed to have retorted to this “that he would begin to weave her such a web as she could not lay down as long as she lived.” In the versions found in Fredegar and Paul, then, Narses’ invitation to the Lombards is the result of fear and hatred of the imperial couple, not of a wish to teach the Romans a lesson.

Thus in these western sources on Narses there is encountered a nice inversion of the old western orientalist approach to eunuchs: the eunuch becomes a hero, and the victim of the envy of westerners and the subject of the hostile rhetoric of the eastern court: it is ironic that it is the east that threatens to oust Narses from power and confine him to domestic and feminine chores. Like

36 *Liber Pontificalis*, John III, trans. Raymond Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs* (Liber Pontificalis). *The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715* (Liverpool, 1989), p. 60.

37 Though it names Justinian as the emperor, rather than Justin.

38 Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon* 116, also says that Narses was terrified by Sophia’s threats, but does not reveal what they are.

39 For Paul and his history see for instance Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (A.D. 550–800): *Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), pp. 329–431.

40 PLRE 3B, Longinus 5, p. 797.

41 Trans. William Dudley Foulke in *Paul the Deacon, History of the Lombards*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia, PA., 2003), p. 59.

Claudian's Eutropius, Narses is a eunuch who is a ruler, but one in the west and one that merits respect.

Conclusion

For Claudian – and Stilicho – Eutropius was a useful and easy target of attack, as a eunuch who had acquired a powerful position at the court of Constantinople. Claudian was presented with a gift of a subject, and tapped into long established orientalist Roman rhetoric to attack the eunuch and also the government of the east. However, perpetual disunity was not envisioned, but rather the reunification of the empire, under Stilicho. Further, it is clear that court eunuchs, and politically important ones at that, were not confined to the eastern empire but were just as home in the west too. Eusebius the grand chamberlain of Constantius II, operated in both spheres, and under the Constantinian dynasty Eutherius had had a career in the west too. Indeed eunuchs had been a feature of the imperial court as far back as the time of Augustus, and probably before this had been employed in elite households. The tradition of the court eunuch was to remain part of the western Roman court for the fifth century, and continued also in Italy under Theoderic the Ostrogoth into the sixth century. After the reconquest of the west under Justinian a eunuch was even to rule in Italy, and emerge as something of a hero in western sources, which present him as being vilified by the eastern court. Thus the figure of the eunuch could be exploited as a symbol of disunity and represent the effeminate east in opposition to the manly west, but could also serve other ends; all depended on context and the motivations of authors. In reality the eunuch was a consistent and persistent aspect of both parts of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity, a symbol not of division but of unity as a defining feature of Roman culture.

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Kaiser, Rom und Reich bei Prudentius

Christian Gnilka

1.

Es ist schwer, einen Autor zu verstehen – wirklich zu verstehen, der sich für eine Sache begeistert, die uns aussichtslos erscheint; der ein Ideal vertritt, das durch die Geschichte widerlegt ist; der das Ideal auf Anschauungen gründet, die uns fremd oder verkehrt anmuten; der die antiken Götter, die uns in Dichtung und Kunst als reizende Wesen begegnen, als böse Unholde will sehen lassen; der das Verbot ihres Kults als Rettung preist; der als Befreiung feiert, was modernem Toleranzdenken zuwider ist. Das alles gilt für Prudentius, der um das Jahr 400 von der ewigen Größe Roms redet; der die Einheit des Reichs feiert, da es auseinanderbricht; der am Vorabend der militärischen Katastrophen die *pax Romana* verherrlicht. Augustinus sagt: Kein Gut wird vollkommen erkannt, wenn es nicht vollkommen geliebt wird.¹ Wenn das zutrifft: können wir den Dichter verstehen, den zu lieben uns schwer fällt?

2.

„Das Schicksal des Reichs war in einem kleinen Winkel Italiens entschieden.“ Das sind Worte Edward Gibbons.² Er spricht von der Schlacht am Frigidus, in der Theodosius der Große über den Usurpator Eugenius und den Franken Arbogast siegte. Ihre Niederlage bedeutete das politische Ende der heidnischen *resistenza*. Zosimus berichtet, Theodosius sei nach dem Sieg vor den Senat in Rom getreten und habe in einer Rede die heidnischen Senatoren aufgefordert, den Götterkult aufzugeben. Zwar habe sich kein einziger dieser Senatoren überzeugen lassen, doch der Entzug der staatlichen Unterstützung des Kults, den Theodosius damals anordnete, habe den alten Riten für immer das Ende bereitet. Zosimus sieht darin den Grund für den Verfall des Reichs, versteht

¹ Augustinus, *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII, quaestio 35.2*.

² Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. A new edition. Vol. 3* (London, 1823), p. 451.

also den Rombesuch des siegreichen Kaisers als epochales Ereignis.³ Diese Nachricht von einem (zweiten) Rombesuch des Theodosius wird von manchen Forschern skeptisch aufgenommen. Aber Zosimus schöpft aus Autoren, die in zeitlicher Nähe zu den Ereignissen standen, aus Eunap und Olympiodor. Außerdem wird seine Mitteilung durch einen Zeitzeugen bestätigt, der von diesen Historikern ganz unabhängig ist.⁴ Prudentius hat diese Senatsrede des Kaisers zum Kernstück eines Gedichtbuchs gemacht, des Ersten Buchs *Contra Symmachum*. Das Buch setzt den Sieg am Frigidus voraus (1.410; 462f.), ist aber noch zu Lebzeiten des Theodosius abgeschlossen,⁵ also vor dem 17. Januar 395. Prudentius ist Dichter, stand aber zeitweilig, wie er selbst bezeugt (*Praefatio* 19–21), „in der Nähe“ des Kaisers, wohl des Theodosius, gehörte vielleicht zum kaiserlichen *Consistorium*. Wir hören in seinen Gedichten also die Stimme eines Mannes, der aus dem Zentrum der Macht kommt. Aber es ist auch die Stimme eines Dichters, der über jene Freiheit verfügt, die man in der Antike der Poesie gewährte, ja von ihr erwartete.

3.

Das Erste Buch behandelt nach des Autors eigener Angabe (2.1–3) Entstehung und Ausbreitung des Götterkults sowie den Übergang Roms zum Christentum. Der Dichter hat diesen Stoff dramatisch gestaltet. Die Entstehung des Kults erklärt er nach der Art des Euhemeros durch Vergottung der Herrscher, sieht darin aber bereits den Ansatz des Übels, weil diese Männer böse und schlaue Betrüger gewesen seien. Seine Darstellung ist darauf abgestimmt, eine unaufhaltsam fortschreitende Verschlimmerung der Verhältnisse sichtbar zu machen, also eine Dekadenz, die in den moralischen und geistlichen Untergang mündet. Im Großen, auf der geschichtlichen Ebene, zeigt sich das durch die Ausbreitung des Kults, der von der göttlichen Verehrung der lebenden Herrscher zum Kult der verstorbenen und so zur römischen Kaiserapotheose führt, der aber in sich das Prinzip zur Ausweitung auf den Kult der Abstrakta und der

3 Zosimus, *Historia Nova* 4.59; vgl. 5.38.

4 Richtiges Urteil bei Alan Cameron, „Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilico,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 73 (1969), 247–280, hier 247–265, besonders 256f.

5 Vgl. Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 1.37f. *parete magistro Sceptra gubernanti*. Die gelehrten Bemühungen, die beiden Bücher *Contra Symmachum* in den doppelten Rahmen der Zeitgeschichte und des Dichterlebens einzuspannen, haben zu verschiedenen werkanalytischen Entwürfen geführt. Vgl. Altay Coşkun, „Zur Biographie des Prudentius,” *Philologus* 152 (2008), 294–319, hier 300, Anmerkung 19. Ich kann auf das Problem hier nicht eingehen. Ich zitiere Prudentius nach der Ausgabe von Johan Bergman, Vienna 1926 (CSEL 61).

Elemente enthält, also zu immer tolleren Formen der Apotheose übergeht. Im Privatleben ist es die religiöse Erziehung des Kindes durch die Kultübung der Erwachsenen im Hause und den Eindruck des Staatskults in der Öffentlichkeit, die dem Menschen jede Möglichkeit nimmt, sich eines Besseren zu besinnen. Der Tiefpunkt der stufenweise fortschreitenden Depravation ist mit dem Kult der unterirdischen Gottheiten, der Hekate/Trivia und des Dis erreicht. Denn in diesen Göttern verehrt der Mensch, so sieht es der Dichter, jene höllischen Mächte, die seinen eigenen, ewigen Untergang betreiben, und jeder Gladiator, der in der Arena fällt, ist in der Sicht des Dichters ein Opfer, dargebracht jenem Höllengeist, der sich hinter dem Namen des *Iuppiter infernalis* verbirgt.

4.

Da nun, in dieser aussichtslosen, katastrophalen Lage, erscheint Theodosius in Rom, hält seine Rede (1.408–505) und bewirkt einen totalen Umschwung: ganz Rom, Volk und Senat, geht freudig zum Christentum über (1.506–631), nur eine kleine Minderheit des Senats, darunter Symmachus selbst, bleibt zurück (1.548; 574–577; 591f.; 624–631). Die Rede des Theodosius ist also mit Bedacht in die Komposition des Gedichts eingefügt: auf dem Höhepunkt der furchtbaren Verirrung leitet das Auftreten des Princeps die Peripetie ein. Die Peripetie ist ein Element des Dramas, setzt sich aber als künstlerisches Mittel auch in anderen Literaturformen durch. Aus der peripatetischen Geschichtsschreibung hat Livius dieses Mittel in seine Erzählkunst übernommen, und Vergils Streben nach dramatischer Gestaltung des Stoffs schließt häufige Peripetien ein.⁶ Öfters bewirkt die Rede bestimmter Personen den Umschwung, so das Auftreten des Consuls Servilius vor der Volksversammlung im Jahr 495 v.Chr., der in höchster Bedrohung Roms durch die Volsker das empörte Volk dazu bringt, zu den Waffen zu greifen (Livius 2.24). Aeneas vergißt bei Dido seine schicksalshafte Bestimmung, da liest ihm Merkur die Leviten (Vergil, *Aeneis* 4.265–276), „und unaufhaltsam drängt die Erzählung nach entgegengesetzter Richtung, zur Abfahrt des Aeneas“ (Heinze).⁷ Von diesen Autoren hat Prudentius gelernt, das beweist sein Epos. In der *Psychomachie* wird die Peripetie öfters zum Zweck der Dramatisierung der Handlung eingesetzt. So läßt sich das gesamte Tugendheer von den Reizen der *Luxuria* berücken und ist schon bereit, sich ihr zu ergeben, da tritt *Sobrietas* auf und stellt *dictis mordacibus* (*Psychomachia* 349)

6 Erich Burck, *Die Erzählkunst des T. Livius* (Berlin, 1964²), pp. 210–18; Richard Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik* (Leipzig, 1914³/Darmstadt, 1957⁴), pp. 323–26.

7 Heinze, *Epische Technik*, p. 324.

die Moral der Truppe wieder her. Diese Technik hat Prudentius im ersten Buch *Contra Symmachum* dazu benutzt, eine große, epochale Peripetie in der Geschichte Roms zum Ausdruck zu bringen, indem er den Auftritt des Kaisers vor dem Senat als historischen Wendepunkt wirken läßt, darin dem Zosimus durchaus ähnlich, wenn auch die Bewertung des Ereignisses bei beiden nicht gegensätzlicher sein könnte. Für Prudentius führt alles, was vorhergeht, in den Abgrund hinab, alles, was folgt, führt empor zur Rettung.

5.

Eine Konsequenz der dramatischen Komposition ist die Konzentration der Darstellung auf einen einzigen Mann, und die Komposition ist eben gewählt, um alles Licht auf diesen Mann fallen zu lassen – dessen Name übrigens, aus metrischem Grunde, niemals genannt wird.⁸ Aber der panegyrische Zug des Gedichts ist nicht Selbstzweck. Formgeschichtlich bietet das Erste Buch *Contra Symmachum* ein Zeugnis der Gattungsmischung, gebildet aus epischen, panegyrischen und satirischen Elementen. Innerlich zusammengehalten und bewegt wird das Ganze durch das protreptische Ziel, das der Autor verfolgt. Das Buch ist ein einziger, vielgestaltiger Protreptikos, gerichtet an jene Minderheit des Senats, die, wie auch Zosimus feststellt, Roms Conversion nicht mitgemacht hat, also an Symmachus und seinen Kreis. Man hat von Eusebius gesagt, er entwickle seine Ideen als politischer Publizist und in stark rhetorischer Stilisierung.⁹ Das gilt in gewisser Weise auch für den Dichter. Er unterstützt die Religionspolitik seines Kaisers, und dieser Propaganda dient auch das Herrscherlob. Es geht darum, denjenigen Mann ins rechte Licht zu setzen, der durch seine Gesetze dem Götterkult ein Ende gemacht hat und der allein die Verantwortung dafür trägt (vgl. 1.14 *Vir solus, cui cura fuit...eqs.*). Eusebius schuf einen neuen Begriff des Tyrannen: Tyrann ist nicht nur im staatsrechtlichen Sinne der Usurpator und im moralischen der Despot, er ist zugleich im religiösen Sinne der Christenfeind.¹⁰ Prudentius gibt eine Definition, die den Begriff vertieft: Tyrannen kümmern sich nur um das gegenwärtige, irdische Wohler-

8 Der Name ließ sich nur mit Synizese dem Metrum fügsam machen, so ICUR 2 4780,1 = ILCV 1761a,1 (S. Paolo fuori le mura): *Theodosius coepit, perfecit Honorius aulam* und sechsmal bei Claudian. Prudentius meidet solche Synizesen bei Eigennamen, s. Christian Gnillka, *Prudentiana I. Critica* (Munich, 2000), pp. 262f; 348. Allerdings hat der Dichter auch die Theodosiussöhne, Honorius und Arcadius, nicht namentlich genannt.

9 Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (Leipzig, 1935), p. 79.

10 Raffaele Farina, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea* (Zürich, 1966), pp. 226f.

gehen, nicht, wie Theodosius, um das ewige Heil des Volks (1.22–29); denn Theodosius ist Seelsorger (1.19–21) und verwirklicht darum das platonische Ideal des Philosophen auf dem Königsthron, das freilich im christlichen Sinne aufgefaßt wird: er gehört zu den wenigen Herrschern, die „die Lehre der himmlischen Weisheit achteten“ (1.30–34).¹¹ Und folgerichtig schließt sich an das Herrscherlob die Aufforderung, diesem Lehrer zu gehorchen (1.37 *parete magistro*), seine Mahnung zu beherzigen (1.38 *monet*), womit der protreptische Charakter des Werks von Anfang an festgestellt wird.

6.

Auch Hohn, Jammer und Empörung, die Affekte, die Prudentius mit seiner Darstellung der Götterwelt erregen will, arbeiten auf den protreptischen Zweck des ganzen Werks hin, vor allem aber die Senatsrede des Kaisers, das Herzstück des Gedichts, tritt offen für dieses Ziel ein. Sie ist ein psychagogisches Meisterstück, der Denkweise der Adressaten angepaßt, natürlich eine freie Komposition des Dichters, eine Suasorie, die den Tenor der antiheidnischen Edikte des Kaisers nachziehen soll (vgl. 1.506 *Talibus edictis urbs informata ... eqs.*). Der Redner erscheint darin weniger als Gesetzgeber denn als Lehrer. Er appelliert an den Patriotismus der römischen Granden. Die gottgewollte Weltherrschaft Roms wird hier (1.425–432) so aufgefaßt, daß die Herrschaft den Begriff der Überlegenheit über alles Irdische, ja der Entrücktheit von der Welt in sich schließt: *cuncta potens mortalia calcas* (1.429). Aus dieser Situation ergibt sich die Pflicht, über alles Irdische hinaus den Blick nach oben zu richten, das heißt: die Gottheit nicht unten, nicht im Diesseits, zu suchen; die Erwählung Roms zur Herrschaft über die Welt verlangt eine Religion, die die Welt transzendiert. Das ist eine Forderung des *decorum* (1.430 *Non decet... eqs.*). In einem zweiten Anlauf (1.455–460) wird die Pflicht zur Annahme des Christentums aus der zivilisatorischen Leistung Roms abgeleitet; auch sie ist

¹¹ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 1.33f.: *Estne ille e numero paucorum, qui diadema Sortiti aetheriae coluerunt dogma sophiae?* Die Polemik gegen das Ideal Platons (*Politeia* 5.473 C-E) bei Lactanz, *Divinae institutiones* 3.21.6 macht klar, daß mit der formalen Bestimmung einer Einheit von Philosophie bzw. Weisheit und Macht noch nichts gesagt ist, wenn nicht feststeht, was ‚Weisheit‘ eigentlich ist. In der Formulierung bei Prudentius scheint Cicero, *Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.29 benutzt, wo die zwei Begriffe *sapientia* und *salus* begegnen, die dem Dichter (*Contra Symmachum* 1.29. 32. 34. 36) wesentlich sind: *hanc coniunctionem videlicet potestatis ac sapientiae saluti censuit* (sc. Plato) *civitatis esse posse*. Die griechischen Wörter *dogma sophiae* geben der Sache aber anderes Gewicht, lassen den Bezug auf Gott und auf Christus (vgl. 1 Cor. 1:24; 30) durchscheinen.

ein Gebot der *dignitas*. Rom hat den unterworfenen Völkern Recht und Gesetz gegeben, hat dadurch der ganzen Oikumene eine Milderung der wilden Formen des Kriegs und des Lebens gebracht, und deshalb ist es unwürdig (1.458 *Indignum ac miserum est ... eqs.*), wenn Rom sich in Sachen der Religion die unvernünftige Denkkungsart wilder Völker zu eigen macht. Denn heidnischer Götterkult ist barbarisch, was durch die vorausgehende Schilderung (1.433–454) des Kults nach seinen verächtlichen Gegenständen, seinem Motiv (der Angst) und seiner Praxis (dem wüsten, blutigen Opferschmaus) begründet wurde. Als drittes Argument wird die historische Erfahrung angeführt (1.461–500). Rom muß das Zeichen des Kreuzes anerkennen, das der Kaiser als Feldherr, Gesetzgeber und Triumphator in Rom führt; denn unter diesem Zeichen hat einst Constantin die Stadt von der Tyrannei des Maxentius befreit. Und das ist eine Erfahrung, die gerade die Senatoren machten, die vom Willkürregiment des Tyrannen besonders betroffen waren. Damals warfen sie sich dem Sieger zu Füßen und huldigten Christus, dessen Name auf den Waffen des Siegers leuchtete. Darin liegt der Appell, aus der Erfahrung zu lernen. Es ist das hier übrigens die einzige Erwähnung Constantins im Werk des Prudentius, der sonst überall hinter Theodosius zurücktritt. Die Rede endet mit der Aufforderung (1.501–505), die Götterbilder vom Blut der Schlachtopfer, mit dem sie bespritzt sind, zu reinigen und diese Werke großer Meister zum Schmuck der Stadt aufzustellen. Das ist ein Symbol christlichen Kulturwillens, vorgebracht in Anrede an die Senatoren, die *procures* (502). Damit ist für alle Kunstrichtungen, für alle Bildungsgüter festgestellt, daß die Conversion zum Christentum eine Reinigung, Veredelung, Erhöhung der Kulturschätze bringen soll. Und damit ist das innerste Motiv der heidnischen *resistenza* getroffen, der es im Grunde um die Kultur ging, nicht um eine bestimmte Religion, oder um die Religion nur insoweit, als sie Teil der Kultur war.¹²

7.

Es lag in der Konsequenz der dramatischen Gestaltung des Buchs, daß die Peripetie eine radikale Veränderung der religiösen Zustände in Rom auslösen

12 Die Prudentiusverse *Contra Symmachum* 1.501–505 scheinen vorwegzunehmen, was das kaiserliche Edikt vom 29. Januar 399 verfügte: *sicut sacrificia prohibemus, ita volumus publicorum operum ornamenta servari* (*Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.5). Zur Interpretation dieser Verse und der Parallelstelle Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 2.481–484, siehe Christian Gnülka, *Chrêsis II. Kultur und Conversion* (Basel, 1994), pp. 146–50, zum Terminus *ornamenta* Christian Gnülka, *Prudentiana II. Exegetica* (Basel, 2001), pp. 304–12.

mußte. Das heißt: die Theodosiusrede mußte ein Erfolg sein. Ihr positives Ergebnis wurde aber dadurch geschmälert, daß die Senatoren um Symmachus, also gerade die eigentlichen Adressaten des Protreptikos, vom Auftreten des Kaisers im Senat sich nicht hatten beeindrucken lassen. Prudentius versucht im Schlußteil des Gedichts, dem ungünstigen Eindruck dieser Tatsache entgegenzuwirken. Zu diesem Zweck setzt er verschiedene Mittel ein: 1) Er betont mehrmals, bei den verstockten Heiden handle es sich nur um eine kleine Gruppe. Die Mehrheit der Senatoren verlange nach der Taufe und eile zu den christlichen Basiliken (1.544–551); eine Liste der Namen berühmter Adelsgeschlechter soll bezeugen, daß die Conversion die Spitzen der Gesellschaft erfaßt habe (1.552–568). Im Volk beobachtet der Dichter dieselbe Begeisterung: alles strömt zum Petrusgrab am *mons Vaticanus* und zum Baptisterium bei der Lateransbasilika (1.578–586). Es entsteht der Eindruck einer großen Volksbewegung, die alle Zweifler mitreißen soll. 2) Die Conversion wird aus einem tiefen und echten Wandel der Gesinnung erklärt: Rom geht zum Glauben an Christus über *pleno amore* (vgl. 1.523); aller Denken richtet sich auf die Ewigkeit (1.510; 559f.; 587–590). Jetzt endlich erkennt und bereut man auch das schwere Unrecht der blutigen Christenverfolgungen (1.511–523). Der Dichter sieht offenbar erst durch diese Änderung des öffentlichen Bewußtseins die Verfolgungen als wirklich beendet an. Andere Stellen in seinem Werk bestätigen diesen Eindruck.¹³ Daran zeigt sich wieder, wie er bemüht ist, Theodosius über Constantin zu stellen, wieviel mehr ihm sein Kaiser gilt. 3) Der militärische Sieg am Frigidus bleibt im Hintergrund: Der Triumph über „die beiden Tyrannen“ – Eugenius und Arbogastes sind gemeint¹⁴ – wird nur zweimal kurz gestreift (1.410; 462f.), hoch gepriesen wird dagegen der Sieg, den Theodosius als *triumphator togatus* errang (1.524–540): der Sieg nicht über sichtbare Gegner, sondern über unsichtbare (vgl. 1.538), nicht über Menschen, sondern über Dämonen. Dem Sieg in der Schlacht soll auf diese Weise das *odium* genommen werden, das er im Herzen eines Symmachus gewiß erregte; er wird in seiner Folge betrachtet, die der Dichter als Rettung aus schlimmster, aus geistlicher Gefahr begreift und empfiehlt. Die Verse sind hochrhetorisch, sie geben aber den Blick frei auf den ernsten und tiefen Grund des Kampfs, den Prudentius gegen jede Wiederbelebung heidnischen Kults führte (vgl. 1.1–8). Will man dem Autor gerecht werden, muß man diesen Grund für ihn selbst gelten lassen.

13 Vgl. besonders Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 2.678ff.: *Hac me labe ream modo tempora vestra piarunt...* eqs. (Rede der Roma an die Theodosiusöhne).

14 Nicht Maximus († 388) und Eugenius, wie gemeinhin angenommen wird. Eine Begründung muß ich mir hier ersparen.

4) Jeglicher Hauch gesetzlichen Zwangs schwindet schon angesichts der Begeisterung Roms für das Christentum, die der Dichter in seinen Versen einzufangen sucht. Ausdrücklich wird aber auch die praktische Toleranz des Kaisers betont, der Heiden wie Symmachus in höchste Ehrenämter hebt (1.611–623). Was Prudentius dazu vorbringt, bestätigt der heidnische Rhetor Libanios, der sich in seiner Rede *pro templis* mit folgenden Worten an Theodosius wendet:¹⁵ „Ja, du hast tatsächlich die Vertreter dieser Religion nicht einmal von den Ehrenstellen ausgeschlossen, sondern ihnen sogar Machtpositionen gegeben und sie zu deinem Tischgenossen gemacht – und dies viele Male – und auf ihr Wohl getrunken ...“ usw.

Indem Prudentius diese Seite der kaiserlichen Religionspolitik hervorkehrt, gelingt es ihm, auch die Fortdauer einer gewissen resistance unter den Senatoren in den Dienst seines Protrepikos zu stellen, also aus der Toleranz des christlichen Herrschers eine Paränese zu machen.

8.

Liest man das erste Buch *Contra Symmachum*, könnte es fast so scheinen, als habe es das Christentum in Rom vor Theodosius nicht gegeben oder als habe es dort zumindest keine Wirkung gehabt. Die Märtyrer erscheinen nur als Opfer, nicht als Vorkämpfer ihrer Religion (1.514–523). Man sieht daran, wie das Buch als Mahnschrift auf die Geisteshaltung des Symmachuskreises Rücksicht nimmt. Im Laurentiushymnus entwickelt der Dichter eine andere Schau der Christianisierung Roms. Hier läßt er den Märtyrer von der dämonenabwehrenden Kraft der Apostelgräber sprechen (*Peristephanon* 2.457–472) und stellt fest, daß mit der Passion des hl. Laurentius der Niedergang des Götterkults in Rom einsetzte (*Peristephanon* 2.489–500). Aber es bleiben auch hier gewisse Konstanten seines Geschichtsbilds. Das vorthodosianische Rom ist nicht christlich und steht in dieser Hinsicht hinter der schon christianisierten Oikumene zurück (*Peristephanon* 2.433–444), so daß der Märtyrer betet: „Gib, Christus, deinen Römern, daß ihre Stadt christlich sei, durch die du bewirkt hast,

15 Libanios, *Orationes* 30.35. Übersetzung: Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, in *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz*, eds. Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, Reinhard Feldmeier, Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, Sapere 18 (Tübingen, 2011), 42ff., hier 75. Die Parallele bei Libanios beweist, daß nicht jede Äußerung des panegyrischen Dichters falsch sein muß, beweist aber auch, wie verschieden derselbe Befund gedeutet werden kann. Libanios zieht aus der praktischen Toleranz des Kaisers den merkwürdigen Schluß, daß heidnische Religion nicht so schlimm sein könne.

daß alle anderen in Sachen der Religion ein und dieselbe Überzeugung haben!“ (*Peristephanon* 2.433–436). Und weiter: auch hier ist es erst Theodosius, nicht etwa Constantin, der Abhilfe schafft. Der Märtyrer schaut den künftigen Princeps, der die Tempel schließen wird, und kündigt von den Götterbildern in Marmor und Bronze, die dann, von Blut gereinigt, als Kunstwerke dastehen werden (*Peristephanon* 2.481–484). Daß Prudentius dieses Motiv wiederholt, zeigt, wie wichtig es ihm als Symbol christlichen Kulturwillens war. Man hat treffend bemerkt,¹⁶ der Zeitgenosse des Dichters habe bei der Lektüre des Hymnus Verkündigung und Erfüllung in einem erlebt – wie einst der Zeitgenosse Vergils, der in der *Aeneis* las, wie Jupiter die Herrschaft des Augustus voraussagt (*Aeneis* 1.286–296). Aber Prudentius schildert diese Erfüllung dann auch in mehreren Strophen (*Peristephanon* 2.509–528), indem er aus der Zeit des Märtyrers heraustritt und in die eigene, die theodosianische, wechselt.

9.

Das Erste Buch *Contra Symmachum* ist ein Rombuch, und das in konkretem Sinne. Es geht darin um die Zustände in der Stadt Rom. Die Stadt ist gegenwärtig durch ihre Topographie, durch ihre Tempel und Basiliken, Straßen und Amphitheater. Aber Rom bildet darüberhinaus im allgemeinen Bewußtsein das historische Zentrum des Reichs, der Name steht als Inbegriff für alles, was das Reich bedeutet, und Prudentius teilt diese Auffassung. Es wäre daher seltsam, sollte der tiefgreifende Wandel, den er sieht und den er als Vollendung einer weltumspannenden Erneuerung begreift, ohne Wirkung auf seine Romidee geblieben sein.¹⁷ Welcher Art diese Wirkung ist, zeigt er durch Aufnahme der berühmten Worte Jupiters bei Vergil: *His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono, / imperium sine fine dedi* (*Aeneis* 1.278–9). An die Stelle Jupiters tritt bei Prudentius der Kaiser: *Denique nec metas statuit nec tempora ponit, / imperium sine fine docet* (1.541–2). Aber Theodosius kann nicht geben, was Jupiter bei Vergil gibt und nach christlicher Überzeugung nur Gott geben kann, und so

16 Vinzenz Buchheit, „Christliche Romideologie im Laurentiushymnus des Prudentius,“ in P. Wirth (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift für Franz Dölger* (Heidelberg, 1966), pp. 121–44 = R. Klein (ed.), *Das frühe Christentum im römischen Staat* (Darmstadt, 1982²), pp. 455–85, hier 479.

17 Zum weiteren Hintergrund s. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus, passim*; Friedrich Klingner, „Rom als Idee“, in Ders., *Römische Geisteswelt* (Munich, 1965⁵), pp. 645–66; Manfred Fuhrmann, „Die Romidee der Spätantike,“ *Historische Zeitschrift* 207 (1968), 529–61, mit scharfer Kritik an den „erbaulichen Darstellungen pietätvoller Altertumsbetrachter“ (540–42) und einer wenig kongenialen Behandlung des Prudentius (556–58).

wird aus Vergils *dedi* bei Prudentius ein *docet*. Im Wechsel des Verbums liegt der tiefe Unterschied. Noch ganz im Sinne Vergils kann Claudian sagen: *nec terminus umquam / Romanae dicionis erit* (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 3.159–60), aber Prudentius meint eine geistige *propagatio imperii*. Die alle Grenzen von Raum und Zeit übersteigende Größe des Reichs ist Ergebnis der Lehre des christlichen Herrschers, das heißt: seiner als Lehre aufgefaßten Religionspolitik. Im berühmten Schlußkapitel des zweiten Buchs der *Civitas Dei*, das vielleicht durch Prudentius inspiriert ist,¹⁸ verheißt Augustinus dem Römertum, im himmlischen Vaterland werde es „wahrhaft und auf ewig“ herrschen: (*Deus*) *imperium sine fine dabit*. Aber was Augustinus erst für die Ewigkeit verspricht, das bricht nach Prudentius schon jetzt, schon unter Theodosius, an. Theodosius lehrt Rom, „durch eine überirdische Herrschaft auf ewig mächtig zu sein“ (I.540 *supero pollere in saecula regno*), „die irdische Herrschaft fortan über die Sterne oben am weiten Himmel auszudehnen“ (1.589–90 *ardua magni / iam super astra poli terrenum extendere regnum*). Die Ewigkeit hat für Prudentius schon begonnen. Im Zweiten Buch wird das weiter ausgeführt. Es ist klar, daß wir mit solchen Gedanken die Ebene rein historischer Argumentation verlassen und uns der theologischen oder geschichtstheologischen Betrachtungsweise des Autors anpassen müssen.

10.

Das Zweite Buch ist etwa sieben Jahre nach dem Ersten, wohl im Sommer 402, abgeschlossen. Angeredet werden die Theodosiussöhne, aber auch Theodosius selbst ist darin noch gegenwärtig. Der Form nach gehört das Buch in die Tradition solcher apologetischer Werke, die sich mit einer gegnerischen Schrift auseinandersetzen, indem sie deren Wortlaut aufnehmen. Prudentius nennt das *dicta dictis refellere* (vgl. II.4). So verfährt Origenes in seinem Werk gegen Kelsos, so später auch Kyrill von Alexandrien in der Schrift gegen Julian. Augustinus lernte diese Methode in seinen Disputationen mit Donatisten und Manichäern kennen und schätzen und übertrug sie in sein apologetisches Schrifttum.¹⁹ Prudentius setzt sich so mit der berühmten *Relatio* des Symmachus auseinander, die der Stadtpräfekt fast zwanzig Jahre früher (384) in

18 Klingner, *Rom als Idee*, p. 663. Zustimmend Franz Georg Maier, *Augustin und das antike Rom*, Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 39 (Stuttgart, 1955), p. 101 mit Anmerkung 59. Maier betont jedoch mit Recht den Unterschied: die patriotischen Gefühle des Dichters teile Augustinus nicht.

19 Vgl. Christian Gnllka, *Prudentiana* II, p. 270f.

Sachen des Victoriaaltars vorgebracht hatte. Die dichterische Wiedergabe der gegnerischen Sätze ist freilich eine selbständige Leistung, die bereits dem eigenen Beweisziel dient. Zu den Argumenten des Gegners gehört die bekannte Behauptung, der Erfolg spreche für die alten Götter (Symmachus, *Relationes* 3.8; Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 2.488f., vgl. 2.564f.). Prudentius versteht sehr wohl, daß damit die Weltherrschaft Roms gemeint sei (2.578/82) und nennt den wahren Grund: dieser Erfolg werde dem Willen Gottes verdankt, der die Welt unter der Herrschaft Roms einigen wollte. Was dann bei Prudentius folgt (2.586ff.), kann man das hohe Lied der *Concordia* nennen: Nichts ist Gott so verhaßt wie Zwietracht (2.593–597), alle Völker, die der Zivilisation aufgeschlossen sind, sollten daher unter einer milden Herrschaft geeint werden, mit dem Ziel, daß die Herzen der Menschen in der Liebe zur Religion zusammenstimmten; denn nur solche geistige Einheit der Nationen ist Christi würdig (2.586–592) – würdig der Ankunft Christi in der Welt (2.634f.). Diese vollkommene Einheit ist jetzt erreicht (Anaphora des *nunc* betont den zeitlichen Aspekt: 2.614–616). Gott hat die Kriege, die auf der ganzen Welt tobten, beendet, indem er die Menschen aller Nationen lehrte, das Haupt unter dieselben Gesetze zu beugen und Römer zu werden (2.598–607). Es herrscht völlige Rechtsgleichheit, alle leben zusammen wie in derselben Vaterstadt oder im selben Vaterhaus. Gerichtsbarkeit, Handel, Ehrerecht überwinden alle Grenzen: aus verschiedenen Nationen entsteht *sanguine mixto* ein einziges Geschlecht (2.608–618).

11.

Das alles sind bekannte Motive der *laudes Romae*. Sie kommen von weither, begegnen in der Zeit unseres Dichters auch bei Claudian und, wenig später, bei Rutilius Namatianus.²⁰ Aber Prudentius gibt ihnen eine neue Richtung. Lehrreich ist ein Vergleich mit Eusebius. Er hat, Gedanken seines Lehrers Origenes aufgreifend, die Romidee besonders entwickelt: die römische Monarchie und die Lehre Christi sind zwei große Mächte, die gleichzeitig auftraten, zur Blüte gelangten und die ganze Welt befriedeten; die Monarchie beseitigte die Vielherrschaft der Nationalstaaten und damit die Grundlage des Polytheismus und der Kriege, erleichterte auch die christliche Verkündigung; die Herrschaft des Einen Gottes hob die Vielherrschaft der Dämonen auf und so auch die Ursache

20 Claudian, *De consulatu Stilichonis* 3.154–161; Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo* 1.63–66, erklärt von Ernst Doblhofer, *Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, De reditu suo* 2 (Heidelberg 1977), pp. 48–50. Vgl. noch Libanios, *Orationes* 59.171.

der Zersplitterung der Menschheit.²¹ „Zum Imperium Romanum, das die Nationalitäten auflöst, gehört metaphysisch der Monotheismus. Was aber prinzipiell mit Augustus angefangen hat, das ist in der Gegenwart unter Konstantinos Wirklichkeit geworden.“²² Auch nach Prudentius geschah die Einigung und Befriedung der Welt mit dem Willen Gottes. Aber diesen geschichtlichen Prozeß sieht er nur als Vorbereitung eines Zustands an, der erst in theodosianischer Epoche erreicht wurde, und dieser Zustand, die totale Concordia, ist seinerseits Voraussetzung für die Ankunft Christi in der Welt. Die ganze Entwicklung ist also zentriert auf einen neuen Eintritt Christi in die Geschichte, auf eine Parusie, die weder mit der ersten identisch ist, mit der Inkarnation, noch mit der zweiten am Ende der Zeiten.²³

12.

Daher treten bei Prudentius Momente zurück, die für Eusebius wichtig sind: das gleichzeitige Erscheinen zweier *Dynameis*, der Monarchie und des Evangeliums, ihr wechselseitiges Zusammenwirken und dessen Vollendung unter Konstantin: das alles muß fortfallen, weil der Dichter den Blick auf ein anderes Ziel richtet.²⁴ Am besten hört man ihn selbst (II.619–640):

„Das ward erreicht durch die großen Erfolge und Triumphe des römischen Reichs; der Ankunft Christi wurde schon damals, glaub' mir, der Weg gebahnt;

21 Hauptstellen: Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* 16.5–7 (GCS 1, p. 249,26–250,29 Heikel); *Praeparatio evangelica* I, p. 4.2–5 (GCS Euseb. 8/1:14,19–16,8 Mras); *Demonstratio evangelica* III.7.30–35 (GCS Euseb. 6, p. 145,21–146,17 Heikel); *ibid.* VII.2.21f. (p. 332,4–19); VIII.4.11–13 (p. 396,15–397,4); *Theophania* Syr. III.2 (GCS Euseb. 3/1:127*, 12–128*, 20 Gressmann).

22 Peterson, *Der Monotheismus*, p. 78.

23 Das trotz aller traditionellen Elemente doch Neue und Eigenartige dieser geschichtlichen Vision hat Klaus Thraede richtig empfunden, allerdings mit allerlei kritischen Anfragen an den Dichter verbunden: Klaus Thraede, „Concordia Romana in der Antwort des Prudentius auf die dritte Relatio des Symmachus,“ in *Tesserae. Festschrift Josef Engemann*, eds. J. Engemann, E. Dassmann, K. Thraede, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 18 (Münster, 1991), pp. 380–94, besonders 392f.

24 Zwar findet auch für Prudentius die römische Verfassungsgeschichte in der Monarchie ihren Endpunkt und Höhepunkt, aber diese politische Entwicklung bildet bei ihm nur einen Grund dafür, daß auch in der Religion schließlich der Übergang zum Guten und Richtigen erreicht werden müsse (*Contra Symmachum* II.413–440), dient also seinem pro-treptischen Anliegen. Der verfassungsgeschichtliche Abriß bei Prudentius ist durch ein Großinterpolament schwer gestört: *Contra Symmachum* I [423–427]. Vgl. Christian Gnllka, „Römische Verfassungsgeschichte bei Prudentius und Ampelius,“ *Hermes* 140 (2012), 448–56.

seit langem ebnete ihn unseres Friedens allgemeiner Freundschaftsbund unter der Leitung Roms. Denn welchen Platz hätte Gott finden können in einer Welt voller Wildheit und in Menschenherzen voll von Zwietracht, die ihr Recht zu wahren suchten bald aus diesem, bald aus jenem Grunde, wie das vormalig war? So steht es, wenn die Regungen in der Brust des Menschen ungeordnet und die Seelenteile in gestörter Harmonie uneins sind: die lautere Weisheit naht sich nicht, Gott kehrt nicht ein. Doch wenn der Fürst, der Geist, sein Recht der Herrschaft erlangt, des streitlustigen Leibes Stöße und die widerspenstigen Fasern zügelt, alles Fleisch allein durch die Vernunft im Zaume hält, dann gewinnt das Leben festen Stand, das Denken Sicherheit, faßt er mit dem Herzen Gott und unterwirft sich Ihm als alleinigen Herrn. Wohlan, Allmächtiger, komm! Ströme herab in die einträchtigen Lande! Nun faßt Dich, Christus, die Welt, die Pax und Roma mit einigendem Bande umschlingen. Haupt und Gipfel der Dinge sind sie auf Dein Geheiß. Rom erlangt Dein Wohlgefallen nicht ohne den Frieden, und daß der Friede gefällt, macht die Erhabenheit Roms, das den mannigfachen Aufruhr mit Macht in Schranken weist und zugleich durch Schrecken niederhält.“

Concordia und *pax* sind also Bedingungen der Gegenwart Christi; in der Welt wie im Einzelmenschen. Die göttliche *Sapientia* (Christus) nimmt nur dann Wohnung im Menschen, wenn *mens*, d.h. die Seele, die Herrschaft erlangt und die widerspenstigen Kräfte des Leibes besiegt hat, desgleichen ist die durch christliche Eintracht geläuterte *Pax Romana* die Bedingung für die Einkehr Christi auf Erden. Der Dichter gibt uns mit dieser Analogie einen Hinweis auf das Werk, in dem wir seine Vision der Geschichte, die sich hier nur in einem ihrer Teile zeigt, vollständig entwickelt finden.

13.

Die Psychomachie schildert den Kampf der Seele, den die Tugenden gegen die Laster führen. Aber das Gedicht ist in gewisser Weise auch ein geschichtliches Epos.²⁵ Denn die Psychomachie spielt sich auch auf der Ebene der Geschichte ab, und das in mehrfacher Hinsicht. Vorgebildet ist sie in dem Krieg, den Abraham zur Befreiung Lots führte – das ist das Thema der Praefatio; *Fides* tötet im ersten Zweikampf die *veterum Cultura deorum* und krönt die Märtyrer; *Discordia*, die ein heimtückisches Attentat auf *Concordia* verübt, gibt sich als Häresie

25 Dazu Christian Gnilka, "Die Bedeutung der Psychomachie im Gesamtwerk des Prudentius," in, *Seelengespräche*, eds. Beatrice B. Jakobs, V. Kapp, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft 31 (Berlin, 2008), pp. 19–39, hier 29–34.

zu erkennen; die Laster erscheinen als barbarische Störenfriede. Alle diese Dimensionen der Schlacht: die Kämpfe der Seele gegen die Laster, die Kämpfe Altisraels gegen seine Feinde, die Kämpfe des Christentums gegen den Götzendienst, der Kirche gegen die Irrlehren, die Kämpfe Roms gegen die Störer der *pax Romana* – sie alle faßt Prudentius in einer Synopse zusammen, sie alle laufen auf ein gemeinsames Ziel zu, das der Dichter in dem endzeitlichen Bilde des himmlischen Jerusalem erblickt, wo *Sapientia* auf ewig thront. Blickt man von hier aus auf die besprochene Passage des Zweiten Buchs *Contra Symmachum*, erkennt man Ähnlichkeit und Verschiedenheit. Die *pax Romana* theodosianischer Zeit ist nicht identisch mit dem Zustand der ewigen Friedenherrschaft; denn wie der Kampf der Seele im Diesseits nicht endet, so auch nicht der politische und militärische. Die *pax Romana* muß sich gegen ihre Widersacher unausgesetzt behaupten, wofür der Gotenkrieg des Jahres 402 gleich ein Beispiel bietet (2.696–759). Aber wenn der Dichter in seiner Zeit eine innere und äußere Einheit der Oikumene herstellt sieht, die es möglich macht, daß die göttliche *Sapientia* auf die Welt herabkommt, dann scheint er doch eine Art Vorstufe oder Vorbereitung jenes endgültigen Friedens wahrzunehmen. In der Peterskirche las Prudentius die Bogeninschrift, die Christus anredet (ICUR 2.4092 = ILCV 1752):

*Quod duce te mundus surrexit in astra triumphans,
hanc Constantinus victor tibi condidit aulam.*

“Weil unter Deiner Führung die Welt triumphierend sich zu den Sternen erhob, erbaute Dir Constantius nach dem Sieg diese Halle.”

Was diese Stifterinschrift für Constantin in Anspruch nimmt, sieht Prudentius unter Honorius verwirklicht und überboten (II.758–9). Roma spricht:

*Regnator mundi Christo sociabere in aevum,
quo ductore meum trahis ad caelestia regnum.*

“Als Herrscher der Welt wirst du (Honorius) auf ewig an Christi Seite stehen: unter Seiner Führung ziehst du mein Reich zum Himmel empor.”

Hier wird eine Art Gottesherrschaft verkündet, an der Honorius teilhat.

14.

Wir wissen alle, wie grausam der Dichter durch den Gang der Ereignisse enttäuscht wurde – falls er sie noch erlebte. Er entwirft ein Idealbild, aber er war

sich dessen sicher bewußt. Die äußeren Gefahren, die anhaltenden Glaubenskämpfe und die Spannungen zwischen den beiden Reichsteilen, wie sie etwa das Werk Claudians bezeugt, können einem Manne wie Prudentius nicht verborgen geblieben sein. Ein Panegyrikos ist ja selten nur Lob, oft enthält er Züge der Mahnung. Und so scheint in dem enthusiastischen Preis der *concordia* bei Prudentius auch eine geheime Sorge mitzuklingen, scheint sein Protrepitkos über den Kreis des Symmachus hinaus viel größere Reichweite zu beanspruchen. Aber die Geschlossenheit seines Entwurfs hat etwas Großes an sich. Die mehrfachen Versuche in der abendländischen Geschichte, eine *Regeneratio imperii* zu entdecken, sprechen für ihn. Und allen modernen Versuchen, eine völkerumspannende, vielleicht gar globale Friedensherrschaft zu errichten, lassen gerade das vermissen, was seine Vision groß macht: das Hinausschauen über alles Zeitliche, die Überzeugung, daß die Einheit stiftende Kraft nicht allein aus der Politik gewonnen werden kann.

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